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ABSTRACT

Proceedings drawn from a conference on business communication, the 21 papers in this collection are grouped under the headings Corporate Tower Views, Bridging the Gap, and Ivory Tower Views to better reflect the joint concerns of professional communicators on the job as well as the concerns of those who teach business communication. Among the topics covered in the papers are (1) conducting reserch in the history of business communication, (2) communication workshops for staff development, (3) factors that influence the attitude toward video display terminals, (4) making proposal writing real in the classroom, (5) how to write a book, (6) consulting with the corporate community while improving teaching methods, (7) career placement procedures, (8) communications and revolution in the airlines, (9) communication audits to teach communication concepts, (10) organizational communications and a public school tax election, (11) practical approaches to integrating business communications into the accounting curriculum, (12) word processing in business writing classes, and (13) using computer assisted instruction to teach business communication. (HOD)

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American Business Communication Association

1984 Midwest Regional Convention

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PROCEEDINGS

1984 ABCA MIDWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

BRIDGING THE GAP:
FROM IVORY TO CORPORATE TOWER

PATRICIA PEARSON, editor

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Preface

Communicators frequently discuss communication techniques and problems informally--in the company offices, or on the campus. At conferences, they discuss effective communication more formally. The towers far apart, isolation increases. Ultimately, need moves us to bridge the gap between the towers.

Joint professional meetings such as the American Business Communication Association conference allow professionals to hear and be heard. Both corporate tower and ivory tower are glad to trade information. That fact is apparent from the papers proposed for the conference, prepared for the proceedings, and presented at the meeting. Many presenters are concerned that the gap between corporate and ivory tower be bridged. And indeed bridging the gap is essential. Ability to communicate is crucial to survival. Understanding the needs, scope, and problems of professional communicators on the job is crucial to teaching students effectively. Employers must have available to them graduates who are capable of doing the kind of writing, speaking, and listening the job demands.

Meetings such as these make possible the sharing of concerns vital to each of us. By communicating difficulties and successes, we can improve the chance for future successes. This proceedings is dedicated to the successful communication which makes it possible for us to do our daily work efficiently, to live happier and more successful lives, and make a better world.

The Iowa State University English Department provided support which was vital to the conference and the proceedings.

Articles in the Proceedings are grouped under Corporate Tower Views, Bridging the Gap, and Ivory Tower Views. Contributors provided camera ready copy; no articles were edited. Within sections, articles are included alphabetically by first author.

Patricia Pearson, editor

Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa
April 1984

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CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE HISTORY OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Kitty O. Locker
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

ABSTRACT

This paper lists promising topics for research in the history of business communication, discusses how and where to find old business letters, and explains how to use American and British libraries. It lists books which help one decipher handwriting, spelling, and abbreviations and stresses the importance of setting historical materials in their economic and rhetorical context. It includes an annotated bibliography of the studies written to date in the history of business writing and lists some of the work in progress.

INTRODUCTION

The history of business communication is a promising field for research and one in which very little work has been done thus far. It is a congenial area for research for anyone with expertise in the analysis of texts; it is especially attractive to researchers uninterested or untrained in empirical research. However, several problems face the would-be researcher. First, and most formidable, is that of locating the texts themselves. Where does one find old business letters and other documents? Second, how should one analyze them? By their own standards? by ours? The history of business communication, even more than business communication itself, is an interdisciplinary field: to study it effectively, one needs to know something about the history, the culture, the prose styles, and the theories of rhetoric of the period from which the letters come. Neither of these difficulties is insurmountable; this paper suggests ways to solve these and other problems you may face in conducting research in the history of business communication..

The term "history of business communication" can be applied to any study of the changes in business communication over a number of years; both a study of the trends in advertising since World War II and a comparison of several companies' annual reports over the last twenty years are historical studies. Here, I shall focus on problems involved in studying English and American materials produced between 1600 and World War II.

WHERE TO START

It makes sense to start by reading what's already been written about the history of business communication--not only about the period you plan to study, but also about the two hundred years or so leading up to it. Such "comprehensive" background reading will not in fact take very long, for very little work has been done: the bibliography lists all the studies I know of that have appeared in writing. Some of the published material is not very good, but until the field matures, it is still worth reading. Many of the works contain bibliographies; some of them print letters verbatim; some contain good analyses of the rhetorical, educational, and legal contexts in which the letters were written. Perhaps the most important reason to read the work already done is to avoid making the mistakes caused by ignorance. To review a single letter-writer, for example, without showing any awareness of the longstanding tradition of letter-writers--books giving model letters for use in "Friendly, affectionate, commercial, and complimentary correspondence," to quote a typical subtitle--seriously weakens one's credibility and is likely to blind one to inferences one might legitimately draw. In some cases, reading studies serves mainly to inform; in a few cases, one may conclude that the author has not at all exhausted the topic and that further productive work remains to be done in the same area.

PROMISING TOPICS FOR RESEARCH

One of the advantages of working in a field in which so little work has been done is that almost anything you choose to investigate will be a new contribution. There are no "overworked" subjects; one is not in the position of having to think of something new to say about Hamlet. However, the paucity of previous research is also a disadvantage: there have been few preliminary forays to identify the most productive areas for work; there are no "guaranteed" topics which are sure to repay effort. For example, a general, all-purpose topic is the following:

1. What forms of business and administrative communication survive from _____ (Fill in the dates, organization, or country). What features do the documents exhibit in the terms of style, organization, content, etc., etc.?

Such a question may be applied to almost any period, organization, or country; the problem is that there is no guarantee that the answers to the questions will be particularly interesting. I cannot offer guarantees for the following questions, either, but I suspect that their answers are likely to be interesting.

2. Why did the dictamen die? During the middle ages, all business letters followed the rigid formulae for organization, content, and style prescribed by the dictamen. Suddenly, in the Renaissance, the dictamen disappears except for a few formal elements. Why did

it die? Was the widespread growth of literacy responsible? Was it the influence of Erasmus? (And where did he get the formulae he recommended for letters?) Which parts of the dictamen lingered longest? Why?

3. What meanings have been assigned to advice about letters (e.g., "be brief") and why have those meanings changed over the years? (Almost all of the advice in earlier letter-writers could be used unchanged today. However, the examples in the letter-writers make it clear that their authors had a very different concept of, say, a "natural" style than we do today. Is it just that the length of the things we read, or prevailing styles, have changed, so that what seems "brief" or "natural" has changed too?)

4. At what point and why did business letters take on a different style and develop a different jargon than familiar letters?

5. To what extent did the advice and examples provided in the letter-writers and later in textbooks reflect or influence real-world business letters?

6. How have patterns of trade and diplomacy affected the style, organization, and content of documents in different countries? Do traders tend to adopt the patterns of the land in which they are trading, or are they more likely to continue to use the patterns they learned in their own countries?

7. How have different legal situations (specific laws, litigiousness of the period) affected business documents?

8. How have technological changes--mail delivery, copying methods, typing, the telephone, computers, the "electronic office"--affected the frequency, style, content, and length of business documents?

9. Where do the concepts we teach in classes today come from? What changes have these concepts undergone since they first appeared? (Fran Weeks [28] cites George Burton Hotchkiss and Celia Ann Drew's Business English, Principles and Practice [New York: American Book Co., 1916] as the first text to use the phrase "you attitude".)

10. Several individuals who have received acclaim in the world of belles lettres have also held jobs in business or government (e.g., John Stuart Mill, Thomas Love Peacock, and Thomas Babington Macaulay, the British East India Company; Anthony Trollope, the British Post Office; Matthew Arnold, British Inspector

of Schools; Herman Melville, U.S. Inspector of Customs; and Wallace Stevens, Vice-President of the Hartford Insurance Company. How does the style of these writers' business and administrative writing compare with the style of their personal letters? Of their "literary" prose or poetry? Did they influence the style of the official documents of the organizations they worked for?

PICKING A TOPIC

After studying this list and reading some of the studies to date on the history of business communication, you may already have identified a topic you'd like to study. Besides interest, there are two other factors you should take into consideration in choosing a topic to investigate. One is your own background. The more you already know about the history, prose style, and conditions of business in a period, the easier it will be to find and analyze business and administrative documents from that period. Anyone who understands libraries and bibliographies can find out this information, but acquiring it is time-consuming and sometimes frustrating; it's easier if you already have a "feel" for the period. Language is even more limiting: one cannot study materials written in a language one does not read, even if the materials are translated, for one may miss or misunderstand nuances of style and tone which would be clear to one who knows the language. A second factor, and sometimes the deciding one, is the availability of materials. You have two problems here: finding what materials exist, and then gaining access to them. Anyone interested in working with English materials before 1550 should consult Malcolm Richardson's articles listed in the bibliography (2-4); I shall focus on materials produced after 1600.

FINDING MATERIALS

Finding old business letters and documents is difficult. Many researchers are used to finding materials in bibliographies, but that method is of little help here, for only three bibliographies specifically about business writing exist: Katherine Gee Hornbeak, "Bibliography of the English Letter-Writer, 1568-1800" (7), Harry B. Weiss, "A Preliminary Check List of American Letter-Writers, 1698-1943" (29), and Gerald J. Alred, Diana C. Reep, and Mohan B. Limaye, Business and Technical Writing: An annotated bibliography of books, 1880-1980 (18). Certainly you should check these if they cover the period and topic you wish to study, but they will not help everyone. (In passing, we might note that a pressing research need is the compilation of more bibliographies, especially of archival sources.)

If you are studying an organization which still exists, write to it and ask whether it has kept copies of its archives and where these may be found. Many organizations with extensive archives have donated them to public or private libraries. For instance, the Baker library at the Harvard School of Business houses a number of archives including those of the Scoville Company. The Newberry

Library in Chicago houses the archives of the Illinois Central Railroad. The University of Illinois library recently received the archives of the D'Arcy, MacManus & Masius advertising agency, containing not only that agency's ads, but ads for the whole "product categories" from the late 1800's to 1983. Iowa State University's Archives of Factual Film contain industrial films and filmstrips. The India Office Library in London contains over 48,000 volumes of original records, correspondence, and reports of the British East India Company, 1600-1858. The Direct Marketing Association has a library in New York City which contains thousands of direct mail letters and campaigns. A librarian who specializes in archives should be able to help you locate the holdings in your own university's library.

If the organization you want to study is defunct, or if its current employees know nothing about its records, go to histories--the scholarly kind with meticulous footnotes and detailed bibliographies. If you are studying an organization which had political importance, check political histories (such as the Cambridge Histories of England and India). Talk to and read books by people who are studying the histories of organizations in terms of political, social, or economic history. These people may not know anything about business writing, but they are likely to use original documents as source materials for their own research and will be more help than colleagues in English departments.

If you find that a library houses archives that interest you, check to see if it has published a guide to them. For instance, you can consult Carolyn Curtis Mohr's Guide to the Illinois Central Archives in the Newberry Library 1851-1906 (Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1951) without going to Chicago, and William Foster's Guide to the India Office Records, 1600-1858 (London: India Office, 1919) without going to London. Using archives is a far slower process than working with printed materials, but guides like these, which describe the contents and the access numbers of items in the collection, can help you narrow your search by giving the dates, subject matters, and sometimes author or recipient of documents. For instance, the Guide to the Illinois Central Archives contains these entries:

> 6 C5.31 Papers accompanying Board meetings, 1877-1912. (4 boxes)
> . . . Include Minutes of stockholders' and directors' meetings, 1877-1910; Minutes of Executive Committee meetings, 1877-87; . . . . Reports of committees, drafts of resolutions, letters concerning securities, etc; Deeds of land, and letters about sale and purchase, with blueprints, 1886-1912. . . (p. 57).
>
> 1 C5.5 Clarke, J.C. In-letters: President's Office, Jan. 1885-June 1887. (10 v.)
> About 3500 letters from officials, assistants, and other [rail]roads including many Southern

lines. Many pamphlets, statements and advertisements included as well as enclosures of letters to other officials (p. 3).

Sometimes a guide will even contain quotations from the documents it describes. The following entry is from Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Sources for the History of British India in the Seventeenth Century (London: Curzon Press, 1962; rpt. 1975):

> MS. Rawl. A. 400 fols. 1-29 — Copy of a Letter of complaint against President Elihu Yale to the Company, sent by the Defence, dated 20 Oct., 1690, and signed by Thomas Wavell, John Cheney, William Fraser and Thomas Gray. This copy is dated 25 May, 1691, and the signatories remark: 'We could largely add to the same purpose, but that we know it would be unpleasant to your Honrs.' (p. 161).

There are other longer entries in this book which run several printed pages. If one is interested primarily in style, one may be able to use these quotations from the guide itself without having to go back to the original source.

USING AMERICAN AND BRITISH LIBRARIES

Printed materials are often available through interlibrary loan. However, if you need to examine unpublished materials or books published before 1800, or simply want to consult many printed sources, you will probably find it worthwhile to visit the libraries with the major holdings. (The costs of your trip, including transportation, meals, and lodging, may be tax-deductible if you spend more time working than sight-seeing. Check the IRS publications when you plan your trip: you may find you save money by staying and working longer.)

Some libraries, like the New York Public Library, will allow anyone to use the collection, but to use many research libraries it is necessary to get a pass or "ticket." Take along a brief letter from your department head (one copy for each library you want to use) stating that you are a member of _____ College or University and engaged in research about _____. Such authorization is all you'll need to get a reader's ticket.

If you're going to England, compile as many references as possible before you go, and take along full bibliographical citations. British libraries do not use American call numbers; you'll need the library's access number to request a book. If your time will be limited, you may want to look up the access numbers in advance: major libraries, like the University of Illinois', have printed catalogs of libraries both in this country and abroad. Check bibliographies here: unlike American University libraries, British libraries don't have hundreds of reference works just

sitting out on tables; to get them, you have to ask for them--again, by the complete citation. At many libraries, there is a considerable wait for materials--sometimes even more than a day. If at all possible, plan to spend two or three days (or more) at a library; even if you want to consult only two manuscripts, plan to spend the better part of a day. If your time will be severely limited, write to the library in advance, requesting the books or documents you want to use and indicating when you'll arrive. (Write out the month. British usage puts the day before the month: I saw a hapless American arrive at the British Library for a single day of research on April 10th, only to find that the librarians had thought his request was for October 4th.)

If you have a choice, visit British libraries between September and May: they're especially busy during the summer months when American academics are free to travel. Take a supply of pencils, especially if you're using rare or handwritten documents; many libraries do not allow readers to take notes in ink.

DECIPHERING HANDWRITING, ABBREVIATIONS, AND OTHER PECULIARITIES

One of the real frustrations in studying historical materials is that they are hard to read.

The first step in deciphering handwritten documents is to learn how earlier ages formed their letters. You may want to consult one or more of the following:

Dawson, Giles E. and Laetitia Kennedy-Skipton. Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1650: A Manual. New York: Norton, 1966.

Hector, L. C. The Handwriting of English Documents. London: E. Arnold, 1958. Contains examples of various hands, 700-1830. One chapter on abbreviations and contractions.

Jenkinson, Hilary. The Later Court Hands in England from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927. Contains examples of handwriting and ledgers with transcriptions. Excellent place to start.

When one reads modern handwriting, one depends not only on the shapes of the letters but also on the context for meaning. Context is harder to come by in historical documents; to understand it, one must read widely in the period. I recall reading one seventeenth-century letter that contained the phrase "received the 12th of _____." It was obvious that the last word represented a month; I tried every one of the twelve months, but none of them fit. Finally, I copied the word as faithfully as I could. Several months later, reading some printed letters, I realized that the word was "Current," meaning the current month.

Spelling is another hazard. As Jenkinson writes plaintively, "in our experience there is a really large number, if not a majority, of scribes, all through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and well into the seventeenth century, who are capable of spelling any word (including their own names) in three or four different ways in the course of a single page written in the vernacular."

Abbreviations are another difficulty. The would-be researcher must learn, for example, that ℘ indicates "per" or "par", as in ℘fect, ƀ indicates "ber", as in Roƀt, ꝓ = "pro" as in ꝓfit, and ꝰ indicates "s" or "es", as in merchanunteꝰ or damageꝰ .

Even numbers may be indicated differently. It is not hard to learn that xx=scores, C=hundreds, and M=thousands, but one must also learn that these numbers can be put over another number to multiply it: $\overline{CC}$ =CCCC (400) and $\overline{M}$ =3,000 (3 Mille).

PUTTING HISTORICAL MATERIALS IN CONTEXT

To do justice to an analysis of historical business materials, it is essential to put them in context. For instance, study of collection letters should include a summary of the legal context, so that one understands what power a creditor really had and can thus evaluate the threats of lack thereof. One also needs to know how people normally wrote and how they were taught to write during the period in question so that one can identify usages that are merely conventional. For example, letters from the British East India Company to its servants always use the close, "Your Loving Friends." One critic sees this as evidence of an almost feudal feeling of responsibility for one's dependents. In fact, as any study of the letter-writers will show, this had been a conventional close in letters to subordinates for a full fifty years before the British East India Company began using it; it no more indicated love than our close "Yours truly" indicates ownership or possession. Acquiring the information necessary to put materials in context is time-consuming, but it is essential if the resulting scholarship is to be sound.

CONCLUSION

The history of business communication has implications not only for our own field, but also for students of organizational behavior, prose style, and education. Major discoveries are there to be made in one of the richest and most interesting areas available to the researcher. Happy exploring!

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Corporate Tower Views

STUDYING REVISION IN "REAL-WORLD" CONTEXTS

Glenn J Broadhead
Richard C. Freed

Iowa State University

As little as seven years ago, University of Chicago researcher Joseph M. Williams could write that "next to nothing is known about the way individuals judge the quality of writing in such places like Sears and General Motors and Quaker Oats. . . .Virtually no such research exists."

Despite the excellent work of Williams and a few others, his claim still holds true. As do two others. First, we know next to nothing about how business and industrial writers compose and revise their documents. Second, we know next to nothing about how writing is written in organizations, about how writers' composing processes are affected by organizational traditions and practices, about how writing functions politically within and is affected politically by the organization itself.

Several factors account for the dearth of research in on-the-job writing. First and foremost, writing researchers do not often have the opportunity to "live" within organizations long enough to examine how writing is produced. Second, researchers rarely have access to the written products of business writers, and rarer still do they have the opportunity to examine all the drafts such writers use in composing their documents. Third, even when researchers can obtain documents to study, they often do not have access to the authors themselves so that followup interviews can be conducted. Finally, even when researchers do have access to both writers and their documents, they do not have systematic and reliable methods for analyzing and describing their data. Many existing methods frequently depend upon "artificial" or controlled situations that can alter the processes being studied.

Today, we will describe a method of analyzing revision which we developed for an on-going study of the composing processes of proposal writers in one of the nation's largest management-consulting firms. After briefly outlining the basic features of the approach, we will illustrate how it can be used to analyze the revising process of a proposal writer in a realistic work environment.

THE SEVEN VARIABLES OF REVISION

To describe accurately a writer's mental process of revision, we attempt to answer seven key questions corresponding to the variables involved in making a change in a text.

Variable	Question
1. Impetus	Was the change voluntary or involuntary?
2. Item	What was changed?
3. Process	How was the change made?
4. Norm	What prompted the change?
5. Affective Impact	Was the affective impact low or high?
6. Orientation	What was the rhetorical focus?
7. Goal	What was the rhetorical aim?

1. Impetus: Was the Change Voluntary or Involuntary?

We first determine whether a revision is undertaken for its own sake (hence "voluntary") or whether it is necessitated by a previous change (hence "involuntary"). This distinction appears not to have been made in many previous studies of revision, no doubt because those studies tended to focus more on what changes writers made rather than on why writers made the changes they did. In analyses concerned with purpose and motive, however, the distinction can be crucial, since writers' voluntary changes tend to respond to the rhetorical situation, whereas involuntary changes respond to problems of usage and cohesion created by a voluntary revision of the text.

2. Item: What Was Changed?

The kinds of linguistic and textual elements or "items" that can be manipulated to make a revision may be ranged into a hierarchy, ranging from a chapter to a t-unit to a subword or punctuation mark.

Chapter
First-level heading group (i.e., a group of paragraphs set off by a heading)
Second-level heading group (i.e., a section within a first-level heading group)
Third-level heading group
Paragraph group
Paragraph
Sentence group (a string of related sentences within a paragraph)
Sentence
T-unit (i.e., an independent clause plus any dependent structures that modify it)
Macrosyntactic structure (e.g., an independent clause, a non-restrictive relative or subordinate clause, an appositive, a prepositional phrase set off by punctuation)
Bound phrase within a macrosyntactic structure

Word
Alphanumeric character or subword (e.g., -ed, -ing, pre-, a, b, c, d, 1, 2, 3)
Punctuation mark

3. Process: How Was the Change Made?

Although a revision can be accomplished by the apparently simple processes of inserting, deleting, replacing, moving, splitting, and joining, these familiar terms can be problematic, since replacements, moves, splits, and joins can be treated as combinations of the two primary processes of insertion and deletion. In addition, the terms may also be misleading because what is true of the physical act of making a revision with pencil on paper (scratching out one word and writing in another) may not be true of the mental act of conceiving of a revision (replacing one word with another).

This distinction at first seems trivial, but it has an important bearing on quantification of the revisions made in a text. For example, if a writer inserts one paragraph containing ten sentences made up of 200 words composed of 2000 alphabetical characters and punctuation marks, has there been one change, ten changes, 200 changes, or 2000 changes? We call this the "Moments of Revision" problem, which arises because several physical changes might be prompted by only one mental act, one unit of time when the writer decides to make a change in the text (e.g., "I need to develop this generalization in this part of my report").

4. Norm: What Prompted the Change?

Every revision, of course, involves a motive, a reason for the change. The number of possible motives is so great, however, that a listing of all a writer's motives for every revision in every draft of a document would be painstaking and probably impossible. Our solution is to focus first, not on specific motives, but upon the norms writers attempt to adhere to in revising their work.

At least five such norms may be said to prompt and guide linguistic and rhetorical decisions: cultural, institutional, generic, personal, and situational. These norms influence both the written product and, in a broader application, the writer's behavior while thinking and composing.

Cultural Norms: The Writer's Background and Training. Cultural norms govern rhetorical decisions designed to make the text adhere to a culture's idea of good behavior and good communication in a written document. They are common to writers and readers within a given language or (more commonly) within a recognizable body of language users within a culture. These norms are prescribed by handbooks, textbooks, dictionaries, and the like or are implied by the culture's assumptions about the purposes and values of language and communication.

Institutional Norms: The Writer's Environment at Work. Institutional norms govern rhetorical decisions designed to make a text adhere to accepted practices within a company, profession, discipline, or the like, such as the General Motors Research Institute, the Government Printing Office, the Modern Language Association, the American Psychological Association, the Acme Insurance Company, or Professor Smith's freshman composition class. Examples of institutional norms as applied to texts would be documentation practices (such as APA or MLA), in-house style or format guides, group or disciplinary injunctions such as "do not use the first person," etc. These norms, however, need not be formalized in written documents; they can also result from tradition or practice.

Generic Norms: The Writer's Aim as Influenced by Conventional Formats. Generic norms are those imposed by a particular genre of writing, such as a proposal, a familiar essay, a request for bids, a personal letter to a friend or relative, and the like. These norms establish conventions of arrangement, argumentation, and physical format; They also regulate vocabulary and other elements of style.

Personal Norms: The Writer's Unique Characteristics. Personal norms are linguistic or rhetorical preferences of a given writer. Examples might be a writer's characteristic use of wit or euphony, or her preference for "sincerely" rather than "yours truly."

Situational Norms: The Writer's Audience. Situational norms guide writers' decisions about adapting their tone, style, format, selection of content, level of technicality, etc., to achieve their own purposes and meet their readers' needs in a specific rhetorical situation. Thus, these norms are prompted by a given rhetorical situation, involving the intended readers' supposed values, the demands of the rhetorical task, etc.

All of these norms--cultural, institutional, generic, personal, and situational-- may be thought of as allegorized readers. That is, a writer has not one reader over his shoulder, but five--each corresponding to one of the normative categories. These readers often have different demands that must be satisfied by different rhetorical strategies. Sometimes those demands conflict, and one may over-ride another.

And if norms can conflict, they can also merge. In fact, it may be that skilled writers more successfully resolve conflicts between norms by more successfuly creating (and revising for) a hypothetical "target" reader in whom the norms are fused into a single point of view or "personality," with clear relationships and patterns of dominance between the respective norms.

5. Affective Impact: Was the Affective Impact Low or High?

We further differentiate revisions by whether they have low or high affective impact on the reader. Low-affect changes generally address matters of cohesion, usage, and the cognitive relationship between the reader and the discourse-- assuming that nothing in the rhetorical

situation invests these elements with high affective value, such as a reader known to be pathologically enraged by an errant pronoun reference, a comma splice, or anything else that might stir a reader's passions. High-affect changes address the reader's feelings about the subject of the discourse.

6. Orientation: What Was the Rhetorical Focus?

A revision may be oriented to one or more of three factors: toward the ideas in the discourse, toward cohesion, or toward usage/style. In general, idea orientations involve meaning as dualistic theories of style construe it-- i.e., as involving the referential sense (denotation) and the logical relationships (argument) of the discourse, respectively, with changes in referential meaning being produced mainly by insertions, deletions, and replacements, and with changes in logical meaning being produced mainly by moves, splits, and joins. Cohesion and Usage/Style orientations deal with aspects of discourse that monistic theories of style also construe as involving meaning. Cohesion, for example, involves "text-oriented" meaning, or the meaning-creating consistencies of language that operate within a particular text. Similarly, revisions oriented to usage/style involve the social meaning or ethos implied by the sociolinguistic habits and preferences evident in the text.

We define an orientation toward ideas as a change in information, a change in logical relationships, or a change in the order of ideas. Of these, a change in the informational content of the discourse might include either vocabulary or the level of detail in which statements are developed. A change oriented toward ideas might also involve such broad factors as the argument, plot, or arrangement of the discourse, including any minor change in the order of ideas that is not prompted by cohesion.

A revision oriented to cohesion is a change in the signals of relationships between one part of the discourse and another.

Since, in its ordinary senses, "usage" can refer either to matters of conformity or to matters of clarity, some of the aspects of language related to "usage" are also oriented toward the cohesiveness of the text. This of course poses a problem in describing the orientation of some changes. For example, if a writer changes "This is clear" to "This point is clear," she might do so because she recognizes that the cohesion of the text (the clarity of the reference-word "this") would be improved by the lexical cohesion supplied by the word "point"; or she might do so out of conformance to the usage rule that "'This' should never be used without a noun after it."

To resolve such problems of classification, we ask our writers what they had in mind when they made the change-- in order to establish whether one orientation or another (or both) was the stimulus for change. In the event that the writer could not be asked, or could not remember, or just didn't answer, we divided the handbook rules into two classes: a usage group, which we assigned to the usage orientation, and a cohesion group,

which we assigned to the cohesion orientation. In other words, when we could gain no entry to the writer's mind, for the sake of convenience and efficiency we categorized according to effect rather than intent. Unless something in a text led us to think differently, therefore, we treated the following as cohesive matters: abbreviations and acronyms, coordination, correlative conjunctions, frame sentences, function words, headings, hyphenation, misplaced or squinting modifiers (when confusing), parallel and nonparallel squencing of free modifiers, parallelism, pronoun reference, punctuation (when it shows relationships between structures), shifts (in direct/indirect discourse, case, mood, number, person, tense, voice), subordination. We treated the following matters as usage/style: ambiguous word choice, anticipatory constructions ("it is," "there are"), awkward or forbidden expressions ("hopefully," "is because"), awkward repetition of words or phrases, capitalization, clausal frames ("Johnson reported that. . ."), conjunction at the beginning of a sentence, dangling modifiers (when clarity is not an issue), diction (abstraction, specificity, figurative language, triteness), double negatives, euphemisms, expletives, foreign words, hypernominalization (stacked nouns), intensifiers, jargon, neologisms, nominalization (noun phrase instead of verb), prepositions at the end of clauses or sentences, relative pronouns (favored usage, is in "that" over "which" in restrictive clauses), sexist language, word choice (length, origin, or familiarity).

7. Goal: What Was the Rhetorical Aim?

The contextual and purposive elements of norm, affect, and orientation coalesce into immediate goals of revision. In the case of one of our proposal writers, we identified twenty-six such goals, grouped here according to the orientation with which they are associated.

Idea

1. To be accurate: adds, removes, or replaces inaccurate information.

2. To be safe: removes, replaces, or adds a qualifier; removes or replaces questionable claims or implications

3. To be thorough: develops an idea for logical or rhetorical consistency, for organizational or personal standards, or for situational needs.

4. To be relevant: removes or replaces information that is irrelevant, or unnecessary, or confusing.

5. To be coherent: alters the logical or rhetorical structure of the text.

Cohesion

6. To signal relationships with a cohesive tie (adverb, prepositional phrase, or infinitive), whether free or bound.

7. To signal relationships with a pronoun (including revisions to clarify pronoun reference).

8. To signal relationships by graphic means (e.g., a heading, a paragraph indentation, highlighting)

9. To signal relationships through syntax (e.g., syntactic parallelism, coordination, or subordination.

10. To signal relationships by lexical means (e.g., repetition of a key term, use of synonyms).

11. To be readable: recasts information into more easily comprehensible structures through segmentation, or desegmentation.

Usage

12. To avoid jargon: eliminates specialized language that the reader would not understand.

13. To avoid weak repetition

14. To be correct (punctuation).

15. To be correct (spelling).

16. To be correct (idiom).

17. To be correct (capitalization).

18. To be correct (split infinitives, dangling modifiers, etc.).

19. To condense: eliminates wordiness of expression.

20. To sound better: creates euphonious or personally pleasing language.

High Affect

21. To avoid a threat: removes a claim or implication that threatens the position or well-being of a reader

22. To avoid an insult: removes a claim or implication that ridicules or admonishes the reader.

23. To bond with the reader: establishes rapport between the writer and the reader.

24. To build credit: adds claims or implications about the writer's attributes or position that would impress or intimidate the reader (or eliminates self-damaging claims or implications).

25. To feed a wish: adds claims or implications that stress positive results for the reader or that create or satisfy a need in the reader

26. To stroke the reader: adds claims or implications that commend or flatter the reader.

APPLICATIONS OF THE SIX VARIABLES

According to our analysis, then, there are six main variables involved in revising: the item changed (eleven or more types), the process used to make the change (six types), the level of freedom of the change (two types), the orientation of the change (four types), the affective impact of the change (two types), and the norm that prompts the change (five types). In other words, not counting the distinction between primary and secondary changes, any of six processes could be applied to any of eleven kinds of item, with either high or low affect, oriented toward any of four factors, and prompted by any of five norms. As a writer sits down to "revise" a text, therefore, the number of available things to do is 6 x 11 x 2 x 4 x 5, yielding 2640 ways of "making a revision." In actuality, however, fewer than 2640 ways exist, since some of the concatenations of the variables are not possible (e.g., one cannot split an alphabetical character or a punctuation mark). Even so, the sheer quantity of ways that are possible supports the increasingly common claim that revision is a complicated process. Thus, teachers ought not to be too surprised if the average high school senior or college freshman has not mastered the art of revising.

Nor should it be surprising that we will not try to account for all possible combinations of variables in this article. Rather, we will try to give an overview of how these variables might interact, focusing briefly on a set revisions to a hypothetical text. This exercise will illustrate our primary focus on the writer's conscious motives for making a change (emic factors of revision) rather than on readers' interpretations of changes or on some logical (etic) system of analysis which transcends motivation for a truly objective account of "what happens." The exercise will also illustrate some of the strengths and limitations of our approach.

Let us suppose that the writer is an employee of a firm that manufactures and sells large and small computers. During the past quarter, sales of small computers have declined 25 percent, so the firm's Director of Sales and Services has asked the writer (who is the Assistant Director)

to investigate the matter and then write a one-paragraph report that identifies the cause of the decline and recommends a solution. This report will be sent not only to the Director, but to other top executives in the firm as well, so the assistant (new to her position) may need to exercise considerable care in her short memo, and might be expected to revise it carefully. Writing hurriedly, she produces the following first draft:

1 Sales have decline dramatically in the last
2 quarter. There are four causes for this. First,
3 and more important, advertising policy is directed
4 toward the private users, rather than the small bus.
5 market. This is wrong because home computers are a
6 luxury for most people, while small computers are of
7 great importance to many small businesses, and being
8 tax deductible, are more economically feasible for
9 businesses than for homes. Second, our commission
10 plan for sales personnel encourages sales of large
11 rather than small computers, since the comission for
12 small is 10 percent and the comission for big is
13 twelve percent!
14 There has been some slightly higher than average
15 turnover in personnel (eight in all) during the last
16 quarter that might be thought to have had some effect
17 on sales. But the new salesmen have as good a record
18 of sales during the quarter as our veterans.
19 Finally, there's some low morale on the part of many
20 salesmen to our sales polciy.
21 Since these advertising policy is obviously the
22 main effect, spend some money to devise a new focus
23 on small business.

Let us now look at some changes to this draft that would illustrate the interplay of the six variables involved in revision. We must keep well in mind that we are not here presenting a model of the composing process, but rather systematically illustrating some relationships between the six variables.

One set of revisions the writer could make to her first draft might be oriented toward aspects of usage and style, prompted mainly by cultural norms. Thus, in line one, she might insert the letter "d" after "decline" to regularize tense; she might replace the abbreviated "bus." with the word "business"; she might replace the contracted "there's" with "there is"; she might avoid the shift from declarative to imperative by adding "we should" before "spend" in line 22. In addition to these cultural-norm, low-affect changes, however, she might realize that her reader-boss hates exclamation marks, and thus might replace that mark in line 13 with a period (a high-affect usage revision); or she might remember that her company observes the "rule of ten" for numbers and words, so that she would replace "10" with "ten" in line 12--a low-affect, organization-prompted, usage-oriented revision.

A second set of revisions the writer could make might be oriented toward cohesion. In this case, since only two of the "four" causes

announced in the frame sentence "There are four causes for this" are marked by enumerative signals ("first," "second"), the echoing adverbial free modifier "third" (punctuated by a comma) could be inserted before "There" in line 14; this would also require a secondary change of the upper-case "T" in "There" to a lower-case "t." For the same reason, the word "finally" in line 19 could be replaced by "Fourth." Also, since the paragraphing in the first draft is illogical (two of the four causes being discussed in the first paragraph and another two in the second paragraph), the second paragraph might be joined to the first; or a series of splits might set off the discussion of each "cause" into a separate paragraph. In a longer report (especially one with short paragraphs), the headings "Causes of the Decline in Sales" and "Recommendations" might be inserted at appropriate points. Finally, the cohesive word "these" in line 21 might be replaced by the reader-writer unifying word "our"--a high-affect, cohesion-oriented revision prompted by the rhetorical situation.

A third set of possible revisions could be oriented to the line of thought. On the one hand, the writer might come to think that low morale is not a cause of the decline but is instead an effect of the decline; thus, she might eliminate a step in her argument by deleting lines 19 and 20--a low-affect change prompted by a cultural imperative to tell the truth if there is no reason not to (for example, see Grice's cultural presumptions underlying conversational implicature). This change would also require a subsequent cohesive change in line 2, replacing "four" with "three." A high-affect line-of-thought change might be prompted by the writer's realization that the "advertising policy" that she attacks right away was thought up by her irascible boss, who tends to blame others for problems rather than himself. Thus, she might recast her line of thought by moving the discussion about the advertising policy's defects so that it follows the discussion about personnel turnover; this move deemphasizes the attack somewhat, and also decreases her bosses' potentially antagonistic response by first citing causes he is more likely to concur with.

Finally, low-affect, idea-oriented revisions might most likely by prompted by general cultural imperatives about communication, such as (again) those hypothesized by speech-act theorists (e.g., Be concise, Be relevant). For example, the writer might check her notes and realize that six, not eight, persons were replaced during the quarter, and she would therefore replace "eight" with "six" in line 15. If motivated by situational norms, the writer might realize that not all of her readers would realize that the decline in sales is confined to small computers, rather than large ones; so she might insert "of small computers" after "Sales" in line 1. Conversely, if her first draft had included three or four sentences describing the small computers in detail, she might delete those sentences as being unnecessary for the executives to understand her claims. Or if she thought that "in the last quarter" (lines 1-2) was potentially vague, since it could refer either to the quarter coming to an end as she wrote her report or to the quarter before that), she might replace that phrase with the more specific "between January and March, 1983."

High-affect changes in idea motivated by situational norms might also occur. For example, though eight people may in fact have been replaced during the previous quarter, the writer may believe that this information

might needlessly alarm the executives, so that they would not accept her claim that personnel turnovers were not a significant cause of the decline; hence, she might replace the specific word "eight" with the more general (or more vague) word "several," or perhaps might insert the reassuring qualification "only" before "eight." Or she might believe that, while the sales strategy is "obviously" the cause, it would be insulting to say so to the person who commissioned the report and to others who will read it; so she might delete the word "obviously" in line 21. In a later period of revision, she might decide that the claim in lines 21 and 22 (that the advertising policy is the main cause of the decline) is too strong for a subordinate to make to superiors; thus, she might insert the word "apparently" after "is" or else replace "is" with "may be a significant."

Naturally, many other combinations of variables are possible, but these examples illustrate some of the most common motives and procedures for revision in one sort of real-world setting. By analyzing drafts of texts for these six main variables, as we are currently doing with drafts of proposals in a management-consulting firm, we can create a full record of a writer's revisions. Since this record is easily quantifiable, an author's shifting emphases between items, processes, levels, orientations, affective impact, and norms can be expressed as percentages or rates--information which can help guide and refine qualitative analyses of the differences between texts. For example, if only 10 percent of a writer's second-draft changes are of high affective impact, but 40 percent of her third-draft changes are of high affective impact, then we can hypothesize that the writer's "revision style" is first to deal with non-controversial (perhaps "writer-based") concerns and then to address the controversial ("reader-based") aspects of the writing situation. In addition, these percentages can be correlated with a variety of stylistic features, such as syntactic complexity, variability, and variety, measures of readability, and cohesive ties. Thus, through this method of analysis, we may address the needed areas of research described at the outset of this article.

COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT
Staff Development involves working over a period of time with individuals within an organization for the purpose of growth and development, both personally as well as professionally. This paper draws from what educators have found to be true of adult learners and effective staff training sessions. A prescription for developing communication workshops follows.

Staff development has become an area of great interest to communicators in recent years. Unfortunately, there is little research available that defines what constitutes "effective" staff training. This paper seeks to combine the expertise of the educational consultant in order to fully understand the components of effective staff training, characteristics of the adult learner which may be relevant to the trainer, and the steps towards developing communication workshops for staff development.

In this paper, it is important to make a distinction between staff development and consulting. Staff development involves working with personnel, over a period of time, to generate a desired behavioral change. On the other hand, consulting covers a wide range of activities, one of which might include staff development.

The experience within the world of education has indicated six factors that mark a successful staff development program. Programs that are effective are concrete, on-going, use local resource personnel, incorporate staff support activities, are teacher-specific (may be analogized as worker-

specific), and include the active participation of the building principal (may be analogized as manager or supervisor).[1] Each of these components will be examined briefly in the paragraphs which follow.

Effective training is concrete--that is, it is practical and allows "hands on" experience. Staff development is often just a dissemination of a mass of information. It should provide an opportunity for the participants to practice what has been presented. Time should be allocated for role play and individual practice.

Effective training is part of an on-going program. Training that is on a "one-shot" basis is not as effective as an on-going program. After participants have had opportunity to practice in the session, they will need to try it in their work place. As they do, they may have questions or wish to discuss their attempts to implement the techniques. There may be too much information in the staff development program to present in one session. Supervisors will need to sequence the training so participants have an opportunity to try the techniques in their jobs, and then ask for further assistance.

Effective training utilizes local resource personnel. Many employers make extensive use of outside consultants in their staff development programs. There is certainly a place for the use of outside consultants in staff development. However, the use of local resource personnel has been more effective in initiating change. Workers need to have ready access to staff developers so they can go to them for direction and information. Many workers feel that outside consultants have little understanding of localized conditions. A local resource person will be much more credible to them.

The use of local resource personnel may be desireable, but there may be a lack of trained personnel available. Organizations may need to train their own people to act as facilitators. This can be accomplished by bringing outside consultants to train a group from within, or by sending individuals

to training opportunities.

Effective training incorporates staff support activities. There needs to be opportunity for workers to interact with each other about the efficacy of the training they receive. This interaction will give them opportunity to discuss successes, failures, and modifications.

Effective training is teacher (worker)-specific. The indications are that individualized learning programs yield better results.[2] It may be impossible for an organization to develop individual programs for each worker. However, it is possible for the organization to conduct a survey to determine interests and needs. It can then group workers with similar interests and needs and develop programs for these groups.

Effective training includes the active participation of the building administrator (supervisor). In education, the effectiveness of staff development programs has been dependent upon the active participation of the building administrator. This role may be likened to that of supervisor or manager. The person filling this role must be enthusiastic, knowledgeable, involved in the training process and perceived as an effective leader.

Although the above discussion was particularized for the world of education, much of it can be analogized to staff development in general. Education can also provide us with valuable information about the nature of the adult learner. There are many characteristics of the adult learner that are relevant to planning staff development programs. Research cited by Wood and Thompson[3] indicates that

> Adults will learn, retain, and use what they perceive is relevant to their personal and professional needs.
>
> Adults will commit to learning something when the goals and objectives of the training are considered realistic and important to the learner; that is, job-related and perceived as being immediately useful.
>
> Adult learners need to see the results of their efforts and

have accurate feedback about progress toward their goals.

Adult learning is ego-involved. Learning a new skill, technique, or concept may promote a positive or negative view of self. There is always a fear of external judgment that we adults are less than adequate, which produces anxiety during new learning situations such as those presented in staff development programs.

Adults come to any learning experience with a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, skills, self-direction, interests, and competence. Individualization, therefore, is appropriate for adults as well as children.

Adults want to be the origins of their own learning; that is, involved in the selection of objectives, content, activities, and assessment in staff development. Closely related to this is the idea that adults reject prescriptions by others for their learning, especially when what is prescribed is viewed as an attack on what they are presently doing.

Adult motivation for learning and doing one's job has two levels. One is to participate and do an adequate job. The second level is to become deeply involved, going beyond the minimum or norm. The first level of motivation comes as a result of good salary, fringe benefits and fair treatment. The second builds on the first, but comes from recognition, achievement, and increased responsibility--the result of our behavior and not more dollars.

Motivation is produced by the learner; all one can do is encourage and create conditions which will nurture what already exists in the adult.

Adult learning is enhanced by behaviors and training that demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for the learner.

Those involved in staff development need to be cognizant of these characteristics. It is especially important that the training be perceived as important by the learner. Motivation is highly reliant upon the attractiveness of the program and expectations that the outcome will be successful.[4] With these things in mind, a closer look at the content of effective staff training sessions is in order.

Because "effectiveness" is such a value-laden term, research into what constitutes effective staff training is difficult. For our purposes, it will refer to the successful coordination of supervisor, trainer and staff to

create learning and generate behavioral change. Six steps are necessary for effective communication workshops used for staff training: 1) determining the staff situation; 2) assessing staff needs; 3) formulating objectives; 4) designing the staff training session; 5) conducting the staff training session; and 6) evaluating the session for effectiveness and improvement. The coordination of these six steps will be illustrated by presenting an actual program developed by the author in conjunction with Barbara Hendrickson, Associate Director of Personnel at Wheaton College.[5]

Determine the Staff Situation

The process of staff training is usually initiated by a supervisor who is motivated to cultivating personal and professional development among the staff. The supervisor sets many of the parameters for the staff training session in terms of targeting the group which will benefit from training, the intent of the program, the date and length of the training session(s), the physical arrangements for conducting the sessions, budget considerations, and the appropriate evaluation to appraise learning after the session is completed. Many of these arrangements can be coordinated with the staff trainer, once this person is selected, establishing an expectation of duties and roles for both parties. This first step takes place many months before the actual session is conducted, and may be the first of several meetings between supervisor and trainer.

Assess Staff Needs

As pointed out earlier, adult learners will learn in proportion to what they feel is important to learn, both personally and professionally. As the staff trainer, it is important to listen carefully to what the supervisor feels the needs are, as well as probe for a full understanding of the situation as seen in the eyes of the staff. A successful program will

intersect with expectations and needs of both supervisor and staff.

Formulate Objectives

Given the expectations of management and needs of staff, the trainer now must knit the two into concrete, measurable objectives which can be linked to what will take place in the training session. Program objectives will later be translated into individualized learning exercises which will reinforce the content of the training sessions. At the completion of the staff training program, the objectives are what will be measured to determine actual effectiveness.

Design the Staff Training Session

Several steps confront the trainer at this point, which involves the skillful translation of objectives into action. Methods and content must be designed with the target group in mind, necessary materials prepared, and any additional trainers selected and prepared for their participation in the session. Perhaps the most important first step in program design, however, is to determine the kind of learning which will be used.

Generally, the trainer needs to determine in each learning situation which method fits the group being taught or the content to be learned. Content-oriented methods generally attempt to resolve existing difficulties and make decisions. When the purpose is improving or changing people or operations, affective methods are employed. A continuum[6] from low-risk, low involvement, content-oriented methods to high-risk, high involvement, person-oriented methods might look like this:

TASK/CONTENT-ORIENTED		PERSON/INTERPERSONAL-ORIENTED
cognitive change		affective change
Problem-solving methods	Creative Dramatics	Self-disclosure
Decision-making methods	Simulation	Psychodrama
Case Study methods	Role Playing	Group Therapies
Listening exercises	Sociometry	Encounter methods
Discussion methods		Video-tape self-confrontation
Games	Instrumented methods / Feedback methods	Sensitivity Training

The instructor should choose the method which is most appropriate to the learning goal. The more the method is "structured" (i.e. planned or organized with predictable outcomes), the better the match from content to methods. With less predictable outcomes, such as in activities from the affective end of the continuum, the trainer is required to be more flexible. Whatever method is utilized, the student should have the option of entering the learning activities voluntarily. In addition, all activities should allow time for "debriefing" which gives participants an opportunity to express what they learned and why.

Conduct the Staff Training Session

Adults want to be involved in their learning, which makes the experiential approach a useful one to the staff trainer.[7] This approach lets members experience the activity cognitively and emotionally without prior knowledge of the way they are "supposed" to be learning. Often this leads to greater initiative and responsibility in accomplishing the intended objective. The trainer creates and maintains an atmosphere conducive to meaningful growth and learning. Since experiential learning is inductive, this can be seen more clearly in the debriefing process.

Evaluate for Effectiveness and Improvement

Generally, the evaluation process is conducted by the supervisor or program worker, although it may be done by participants, a co-worker, the sponsoring institution or the trainer himself. Evaluation is subjective in nature and it is difficult to measure every participant's behavior when he returns to the job. In order to determine what to measure, the evaluator needs to look again at the objectives of the session and tailor a series of categories by which to measure them.

Participants can reinforce their learning as they speak or write their

reactions to the staff training session. These reactions will provide valuable input to their supervisor as to the program "fit" of staff needs to learning objectives in the session. The effective session should reflect a sequencing of program and content in an orderly way which allows for individual learning to be realized. This gives feedback as to whether the program should be altered in some way for greater effectiveness. In addition, it helps the supervisor determine future participants who will gain the most from a similar session.

In conclusion, there is a great deal of opportunity for research in the area of staff development. What is obvious, however, is the vital role the supervisor plays in identifying staff training needs and qualified trainers to implement communication programs to meet those needs. Programs which are effective have clear objectives and actively seek to involve participants in their own learning. They incorporate a training method which maximizes the learning effort. Feedback from session interactions as well as formal evaluation complete the package, enabling the supervisor. trainer, and staff member to reevaluate and reinforce the experience. Until there is a definitive statement of "effective" staff training, the findings discussed in this paper should enable the communication specialist to make a more productive effort.

ENDNOTES

[1] Reported by Paul Berman and Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin in Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Volume 7 on "Implementing and Sustaining Innovations," (Santa Monica: The Rand Corp., 1978).

[2] Fred Wood and S. R. Thompson, "Guidelines for Better Staff Development", Educational Leadership, February 1980, pp. 374-378.

[3] Wood and Thompson, op. cit.

[4] Paula Silver, "Synthesis of Research on Teacher Motivation," Educational Leadership, April 1982, pp. 551-54.

[5] For the reader, handouts illustrating this process and resource materials are available upon request from the authors.

[6] Alton Barbour and Alvin Goldber, Interpersonal Communication: Teaching Strategies and Resources, (New York: ERIC/RCS Speech Communication Module, 1974), pp. 52-53.

[7] Brent R. Ruben, Human Communication Handbook: Simulations and Games, Volume 2, (Rochelle Park, New Jersey: Hayden Publishers, 1978), pp. 11-12.

HOW CORPORATE RECRUITERS ANALYZE RESUMES

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Corporate recruiters use resumes as a tool to evaluate and match position requisitions and work group requirements. When appropriate information is provided, the skilled recruiter-interviewer can assess the data provided by the candidate to determine how well the individual matches the requirements stated by the hiring department. The skilled interviewer can further assess the candidate's leadership style, physical attributes, personal motivators, characteristics, and work habits using the factual data offered. This in-depth assessment combines intuition, prediction and experience and can only be verified during the actual interview using the applicant's responses to appropriate questions.

Ten years ago, the Midwest Division of the College Placement Council, an organization that serves 186 Colleges and Universities across the nation, created a standardized form for campus recruitment. The form has been modified by the member schools to meet their own needs; the form adapted by the Iowa State University Engineering College is Figure 1.

The general resume format is derived from the application forms used by thousands of companies around the world. The requested information on an application form, however, goes beyond the interview information requirements because it provides data for wages and salaries, social security, medical records, next-of-kin handicaps, and other facts used to submit state and federal manpower reports. If the company uses application blanks. everyone in an organization is usually required to complete the form--from the President down. On the other hand. every employee is not required to provide or submit a resume.

Typically, resumes are required for salaried employees and strongly encouraged for some classifications of workers who are paid on an hourly basis--for example, clerical employees and individuals seeking summer work. The resume serves to summarize the applicants employment qualifications in an abbreviated format and in a very

College/University Interview Resume

Regular Employment
Other Employment
(Do not include information where prohibited by law)

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Ames, Iowa

Personal Data

Name Last First Middle Initial		Date of Birth
Present Address (Street, City, State, ZIP)	(Area Code) Present Phone	Check one U S Citizen Permanent Resident Student Visa
Permanent Address	(Area Code) Perm Phone	

Work Preference

Brief Statement of Job Interests and/or Description of Work Desired

Date Available for Employment	Geographical Preference	Geographical Objections

College Information

Name and Location of Colleges Attended	Dates (Mo /Yr) From	To	Degree Earned or Expected	Grad Date Month	Year	Academic Major	Grade Point Average	Grade Basis
							Major Overall	A
							Major Overall	A
							Major Overall	A

Honors, Activities and Organizations

Employment Information

Employment and Business Experience (Include Permanent, Cooperative, Intern, Volunteer, Summer work and any prior U S military service)

Name and Address of Employer	Title and Description of Work	hrs/wk	Dates (Mo /Yr) From	To

General Information

References faculty members who know you well and past supervisors, name, title, business address and telephone number

Other Information Community Activities, Hobbies, Interests, etc

Signature	Social Security No	Date Signed

Adopted by MCPA, 1974

generalized way. A single resume with a directed job objective can serve to meet the needs for the screening function for several companies without requiring that the applicant complete the sometimes more elaborate application form.

The interviewer for an equal employment opportunity employer is charged with responsibility for making screening decisions on the basis of the applicants' job objective, the education, the work experience, and the activities. After the initial screening, the employment decision should be based upon a choice between individuals with relatively equal qualifications. The decision, at this point, can be and usually is subjective based on how well the individual is perceived as fitting into the work group that already exists.

Recruiters tell us that between 15-20% of the salaried positions in their company are filled from letters and resumes submitted as part of mail campaigns. The majority of the positions are filled from scheduled recruiting activities; another 10-15% is filled by "walk-ins", people who go directly to the employer and request an interview on the spot. In all instances, the applicant's qualifications are reviewed using at least a resume and/or application form.

How much information can be gleaned and what inferences made from the information offered by the willing college graduate applicant on a standardized resume form? How does the "skilled recruiter" derive information about the applicants' leadership style, ability to work with and within groups, need for attention, desire to work independently and with what intensity of supervision, family economic status, and what motivates the applicant to work?

Starting at the top of the typical resume, you will find the applicant's name and address. Recruiters appreciate having both a permanent and temporary address for individuals still attending school. Two addresses provides you with information about where the applicant is living--on- or off-campus, fraternity, dorm, house, or apartment. You can assume that the permanent address indicates where the applicant's parents, a relative or someone close to them lives. You can even make some guesses about the economic status of the family--suburban address, rural route number or box number, and out-of-state residency status give some information about backgrounds.

The job or career objective gives you an idea of what the applicant thinks he or she would like to do--not necessarily what he or she is good at or not necessarily even what she or he is

qualified to do. As a reader, you want the statement to help you determine what the applicant can do and where he or she would best fit into the company employment structure. Unless the objective is a statement that includes information about the educational major and the career path interests of the applicant, the career objective has no real benefit as a sorting mechanism. In other words, "A challenging job with a progressive company leading to a management position in three to five years." will not do!

Education is usually the next item included in most application forms and, thus, most resumes. For college students, it is their primary asset. On application forms, education is usually listed in chronological order primarily because almost every job requires a high school diploma. Higher education is requested, often in two-year increments. On resumes, however, education is preferable in reverse chronological order with highest level first. The education block should include major, minors, options, emphases, names of school(s) attended with addresses, dates of attendance, and certificate or diploma information. For advanced degrees, titles of theses and/or dissertations and major professors can be included.

Companies use elaborate formulas to determine initial salary offers that take into account information about the school attended, classes, grades, activities, honors, and other details. Grades are more important in technical areas such as engineering research and development than they are in marketing and business applications. In jobs requiring management skills, there is more emphasis on demonstrated leadership ability than there is on grades.

Our form next includes space for honors and activities. This block can include any information the writer wants to provide--usually scholarship information, professional organization memberships, fraternal/sorority/dormitory activities demonstrating involvement, volunteer or elected committee work with campus organizations, and any other data deemed desirable by the candidate. On company application forms, this information might be appropriately placed in a block that asked for "any other information you want to provide".

Work experience is the section that is often difficult to complete because no one knows exactly what to include. I suggest that there are certain "buzz words" that are preferable to others. An example is the differences between "duties" and "responsibilities"--duties are considered a "do it, you have no choice" whereas responsibilities are considered desirable and something to be cheerfully assumed. As frustrating as semanics can be, these semantic differences might influence a reader to believe one candidate has better communication skills than another.

Required information in this block on our "interview resume form" includes the company name and address, a brief description of responsibilities, hours worked each week, and the time span. On other forms where the candidate has more room to describe work experience, more detail can be supplied. On ours, the statement must be very succinct and it is used as a prompt for the interviewer who will be talking with the candidate as the resume is reviewed. Using a regular resume rather than our interview form, and to describe working in a gas station, a description might be: Sell and pump gas for cars and trucks. Perform minor repairs, service cars as needed. At end of shift, prepare cash reports and make bank deposit after closing station. 20-30 hours/week. June 1-Aug. 31, 1983.

From work information the interviewer should learn how many years of work experience the candidate has and both length of service with a single employer and variety of work experiences. It makes an interviewer feel safe to know another employer has had the applicant come back for a second work session or has employed the applicant for more than a summer. If the applicant can relate what he or she has learned working for one employer to that of the prospective job, it is very helpful. The usual response about any work experience is "I can work well with all kinds of people." Preferable would be information about transferable skills such as giving instructions, knowledge of safety regulations, or supervising one or more people; "people skills" are taken for granted if the candidate has work experience.

If the candidate reads or listens to the advice of the people who teach or counsel people about preparing resumes, he or she will be almost paranoid about the possibility that the resume will exceed one page. On the other hand, the recruiter whose job rests on making the best possible decision is torn between the prospect of reading two page resumes and not having sufficient information to make a good screening or hiring decision. Of the two choices, they prefer the information--if it is <u>important</u>.

I feel strongly that information about hobbies and interests is important--perhaps more important than references. It is here that the personality of the candidate is most evident. From data about what the candidate does with free time, the hobbies or interests, provides insight into the character of the person. For example, if the resume says the individual likes cooking, stamp collecting, music, and golf, you are pretty safe if you assume that the person likes working in small groups, prefers minimal supervision, is detail oriented, and had a parent who liked stamps. These assumptions may not all be accurate, but they are a place to start with questions should the candidate be selected for an interview.

The difference between hobbies and interests. by my definition, is that hobbies are long-term and are activities the applicant will turn to for relaxation. Interests may be temporary, dependent upon the activities of friends, but may become hobbies if pursued over a period of time. After individuals leave school, community activities will replace school organizations.

Personal information can be included if the candidate wishes, but should be limited to birthdate and marital status (with number of children if desired). It is not necessary to give height and weight, social security number, location preferences, starting date (if school completion date is provided), citizenship if U.S. citizen, parents names or occupations, spouse's name, or other personal data.

Last on most resumes are references or a statement of availability. With the passage of privacy laws in 1974, the value of written references have been diminished. As a result, the references may not be checked at all, or they will be requested only after preliminary screening. If requested, the employer may ask for the name of the most recent supervisor, the name of a school advisor, or a character reference. If there is room to include references on the resume, I recommend it; if not, list "available upon request."

Always there is a debate about using photographs on resumes. There is confusion about legality. It is NOT illegal for a candidate to provide a picture with a resume. It IS illegal for a company to require a photograph. The recruiter likes having a photograph because it makes it easier to remember a candidate; the photograph can and probably will be used as a discriminator if the individual is not physically attractive, well-dressed, and thin.

Using a resume to select candidates for prospective employment is a challenging responsibility, usually involving management decision-making and discrimination. The well-presented resume allows the reviewer to do that in a way that fits the candidate to the work group and utilizes the skills and abilities of the candidate in a satisfying way. The result is a long-term satisfactory arrangement for both parties.

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS VIDEO DISPLAY TERMINALS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the attitudes of business people towards video display terminals. It is based on a survey of companies which use terminals in their communications. The attempt was to find out what factors shape attitudes towards video display terminals. Based on this study, the most important aspects which influence attitudes towards terminals are: the type of business, the level of keyboarding skills, and the location of the terminal (private or shared use). It is recommended that businesses pay special attention to these areas when they introduce terminal usage to management.

BACKGROUND

During the past few years many companies have put terminals on the desks of their managers. Some companies have carefully introduced their managers to the new technology. They have conducted seminars and awareness programs. Some companies have just put the machines in the office and let managers get used to the new technology on their own.

One of the reasons for introducing the new technology has been the hope that it would enhance the quality of the decision-making process. It was also hoped that managers would communicate more efficiently and effectively once they had access to video display terminals/ microcomputers and word processing.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of businesspeople towards the video display terminal. The study was to explore what factors influence the attitudes towards terminals. Based on the findings, recommendations are made on how to familiarize managers with the equipment so that it is used productively.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire on video display terminal attitude was designed and sent to several businesses in the Bloomigton/Normal area. The businesses which were selected to have introduced terminals in the offices of their managers.

Seventy questionnaires were sent out. Fifty-five people completed the questionnaires and sent them back. All of those were useable.

A Chi-square analysis was performed on the data. Selected personal statistics were cross tabulated with attitudes towards the terminal. Based on the analysis, conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made on how to foster more positive attitudes towards the video display terminal.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The profile (Table No. 1) shows that about half of the respondents are women, half are men. Most of the respondents are between 31 and 45 years old. Almost 90 percent of the respondents work in insurance. A majority has used the video display terminal for under three years. The majority has poor keyboarding skills. Slightly over 85 percent of the respondents have a terminal at their own desk. (The percentages in each table do not necessarily add up to 100 percent because some respondents did not answer every question.)

A discussion of the significant relationships between attitudes and profile follows.

Sex

Sex of the respondents was significantly related to only one item on the questionnaire. Eighty-two percent of the women think that writing on the microcomputer takes less time than writing with paper and pencil, 10.7 percent think it takes the same amount of time, and 7.1 percent think it takes more time. Of the men, on the other hand, 52 percent think writing on the computer takes less time, 38 percent think it takes the same amount of time, and 7.7 think it takes more time.

It is possible that more of the women have worked their way up from a secretarial background and are more familiar and comfortable with the equipment. The men, on the other hand, have traditionally had secretaries; they have not done their own typing in the past. It would be interesting to find this information in a follow-up study.

Age

Age was significant in two areas. Age seems to make a difference in the planning and editing and revising habits in written communications (Table No. 2).

The two older groups use the terminal in planning more than the younger groups. This is surprising. The general assumption is that younger people are more eager to use terminals.

Interesting are the planning habits of the youngest group. With the exception of writing key paragraphs out in longhand (0 percent) the respondents are almost evenly split in their planning approaches.

Table No. 1

Profile of Respondents

		No.	Percent
Sex	Male	26	47.3
	Female	28	50.9
Age	20-30	11	20.0
	31-35	15	27.3
	36-45	18	32.7
	46+	11	11.0
Type of Business	Insurance	49	89.1
	Utility	6	10.9
Job Title	Supervisor	16	29.1
	Secretary		
	Admin. Assistant	8	14.8
	Manager	10	18.2
	Programmer		
	Systems Analyst	15	27.3
	Other	5	9.1
Frequency of Terminal Usage	1-3 Times Daily	20	36.4
	4-6 Times Daily	15	27.3
	7-9 Times Daily	10	18.2
	10+ Times Daily	10	18.2
Length of Usage	-2 Years	20	36.4
	2-3 Years	16	29.1
	3+ Years	19	34.5
Time of Typing Training	High School		
	College	48	87.3
	On the Job	7	12.7
Typing Skills	Excellent/Good	35	63.6
	Poor	20	36.4
Location of Terminal	At Own Desk	47	85.5
	At Other Location	8	14.5
	Share With Others		

Of all respondents, this group is highest in writing out the entire report in long hand before putting it on the computer.

For the second group (31-35 years old), the pattern changes. There are two major approaches towards planning: writing key points on paper and directly composing on the terminal.

Table No. 2

PLANNING HABITS

Age	Keypoints On Paper	Detailed Outline Paper	Key Paragraphs on Paper	Whole Report in Longhand	Compose on Terminal-- No Notes
-30	27.3	27.3	0.0	18.2	27.3
31-35	46.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	33.5
36-45	41.2	0.0	0.0	11.81	47.1
46+	18.2	0.0	27.3	9.1	45.5

Numbers are in %.

The pattern shifts again with the next group (36-45 years old). The number of those who directly go to the computer increases by 14 percent, but the number of those who write out the entire report in long hand doubles and reaches almost 12 percent.

The oldest group (46+ years old) has roughly the same percentage of respondents who compose on the terminal as the 36-45 year-old group.

Of concern to management should be the people who write the entire report in longhand before they put it on the terminal. This seems to defeat the purpose of the video display terminal as a tool for writing rather than just for typing. Management should also look at those who write out key paragraphs first. Depending on the length and the definition of key paragraphs, a substantial part of the report might be involved.

For editing and revising (Table No. 3) the following pattern emerges:

Table No. 3

Editing and Revising Habits

Age	Revise on Paper	Revise on Screen
-30	27.3	72.7
31-35	20.0	80.0
36-45	16.7	83.3
46+	45.5	54.6

Numbers are in %.

In the oldest group a higher percentage of the respondents prefers to edit work on paper than in the other groups. In all other age groups a big majority prefers to revise work right on the screen.

It seems that people who are over 46 years old and who compose directly on the terminal also revise on the terminal. The others in the group revise their work on a printout. In all other age groups the revising pattern is very different from the planning pattern. Many people in those groups may prefer to write material out in longhand first, but once it has been entered on the screen, they work with the material on the screen. Editing on the screen does of course save time and paper.

Type of Business

The type of business the respondents worked in was significantly related to six areas(Table No. 4). The data may be somewhat inconclusive since only six people out of the sample worked for a utility, whereas 22 worked for an insurance business. A follow-up study should include a wider variety of businesses to see whether there is indeed a significant relationship between type of business and attitudes towards the terminal.

Fifty-three percent of the respondents from insurance believe that the use of the terminal has increased the amount of writing they do, 22.4 percent believe it has remained the same, and 24.5 percent believe the amount of writing has decreased as a result of using a terminal. In the utility company, on the other hand, 20 percent believe that writing has increased, 80 percent believe it has remained the same, and nobody believes it has decreased.

Table No. 4

Quantity of Writing and Type of Business

	Writing has--		
Type of Company	Increased	Decreased	Stayed the Same
Insurance	53.1	22.4	24.5
Utility	20.0	0.0	80.0

Numbers are in %.

Respondents from the insurance business think that the use of the terminal has improved and increased cooperation and sharing of ideas (Table No. 5). Nobody from the utility company believes this. All respondents from the utility believe that sharing of ideas has not been influenced by the use of the terminal. No respondent from either group feels there is a decrease in sharing of ideas as a result of the use of the terminal.

Half of the people from insurance plan with paper and pencil and half on the terminal. All respondents from the utility plan with paper and pencil. Exactly the same pattern holds for organizing ideas.

Table No. 5

Sharing of Ideas

	Increase	No Change
Insurance	55.1	44.9
Utility	0.0	100.0

Job Title and Frequency of Terminal Usage

Job title and frequency of terminal usage were not significantly related to any attitude items on the questionnaire. That was surprising since it is commonly believed that use over time and the type of job have an influence on attitude. A follow-up could clarify whether the findings of this study actually hold true with a different sample.

Length of Terminal Usage

The length of time over which people have used a terminal was significantly related to whether the respondents felt the terminal was saving time in writing (Table 6).

Twenty-one percent of the people who have worked with the terminal for over five years believe writing with the terminal takes more time than the traditional approach to writing--paper and pencil. Nobody in the other two groups shares that belief. The middle group, those who

Table No. 6

Time Required for Writing

Length of Usage	Computer Takes-- Less Time	Same Time	More Time
-2 Years	65.0	35.0	0.0
2-5 Years	75.0	25.0	0.0
5+	63.2	15.8	21.1

have used a terminal for 2-5 years, are most optimistic in their attitude. Seventy-five percent believe the terminal saves time, and 25 percent think there is no difference. This was a surprise, since it is usually assumed that longer use of the terminal will increase efficiency. The findings of the study contradict this.

Keyboarding Skills

Actual keyboarding skills were significant in four areas. Sixty-six percent of the poor typists believe that they would have a more positive attitude towards terminals if they had a terminal all to themselves at their desks, whereas 33 percent believe a private terminal would not make any difference in their attitude. Of the good typists, only 12.5 percent believe a private terminal would create a more positive attitude towards the terminal, 62 percent believe it would make no difference, and 25 percent in that group dislike terminals.

Only 10 percent of the poor typists believe that the use of the terminal has increased the amount of writing, 50 percent believe the amount of writing has remained constant, and 40 percent believe it has increased. Of the good typists, almost 60 percent believe that they write more, 26.5 percent believe they write less, and 17.6 percent say they write about the same as before.

Over half of the good typists organize their ideas on the terminal; only 30 percent of the poor typists do that (Table No. 7).

Table No. 7

Organizing of Ideas

	Organize	
	On Paper	On Terminal
Good Typist	41.2	58.8
Poor Typist	70.0	30.0

Numbers are in %.

Seventy-one percent of the good typists believe the terminal saves time, 17 percent believe it requires the same time, and 11 percent think it takes more time (Table No. 8). Among the poor typists, 60 percent believe the terminal saves time, 40 percent believe it takes the same time, but nobody in either group thinks that using the terminal takes longer than writing with pen and paper.

Table No. 8

Typing Skill and Writing Time

	Amount of Time With Terminal		
	Less	Same	More
Good Typist	71.4	17.1	11.4
Poor Typist	60.0	40.0	0.0

Numbers are in %.

A majority in each group does agree that the terminal saves time.

Location of Terminal

The location of the video display, whether it was at the desk or at some other location was significant in six areas of attitude towards the terminal (Table No. 9).

Of those who have a terminal at their desk, 82 percent put their material right on the screen, 13 percent dictate to a secretary, 4 percent write it out in longhand, and nobody uses a dictaphone. In the group which shares a terminal with other people, 57 percent key material into the terminal, nobody dictates to the secretary, 28 percent use a

dictaphone, and 14 percent write materials out in longhand. Thirty-three percent of the people who share involve another person in their writing, whereas only 8 percent of the people who have their own terminal need someone else for their writing.

Table No. 9

Writing of First Draft

	Longhand	Dictate into Dictaphone	Dictate to Secretary	Keyboard Myself
Terminal at Desk	4.4	0.0	13.3	82.2
Share Terminal	14.3	28.6	0.0	57.1

Numbers are in %.

Fifty-five percent of those who have their own terminals feel that they are more creative using the terminal, whereas 55 percent of those who share a terminal feel they are more creative when using paper.

People who do not have their own terminal feel less positive towards the terminal. Almost 30 percent believe the terminal is cold

Table No. 10

Amount of Writing and Location of Terminal

	Amount of Writing		
	Increased	Decreased	Stayed the Same
Terminal at Desk	53.2	23.4	23.4
Share Terminal	28.6	0.0	71.4

Numbers are in %.

and impersonal. Nobody in this group enjoys the terminal, although 57 percent think it increases efficiency. In the other group, 22 percent enjoy the terminal, 65 percent believe it increases efficiency, and only 2 percent think it is cold. The differences in attitude in these two groups are rather striking. Management would be well advised to examine this area in detail.

The amount of writing people do is related to where the terminal is. Fifty-three percent of those who have the terminal at their desk believe they write more; only 28 percent in the other group said that (Table No. 10).

Over half of those who have their own computer say that the use of the computer has fostered the sharing of ideas. Nobody in the other group believes that.

Not surprisingly a vast majority (86 percent) of those who share a terminal organize their ideas on paper. Of those who have their own terminal, 46 percent organize on paper and 53 percent on the terminal.

Table No. 11 summarizes the significant relations between personal profile data and attitudes towards the computer.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on this study, the the most important factors in shaping attitudes towards the terminal are:

Type of Business
Keyboarding Skills
Location of Terminal

The influence of the type of business on forming attitudes towards the microcomputer could be connected with the fact that different businesses require different types of writing.

People who have good keyboarding skills have a more positive attitude towards the terminal than those who have poor keyboarding skills. This has implications for the training of businesspeople before they start using the terminal.

The location of the terminal was most significant in the shaping of attitudes towards the terminal. People who have terminals at their desks are more positive than those who share a terminal with others.

People who have good keyboarding skills have a more positive attitude towards the terminal than those who have poor keyboarding skills. This has implications for the training of businesspeople before they start using the terminal.

The location of the terminal was most significant in the shaping of attitudes towards the terminal. People who have terminals at their desks are more positive than those who share a terminal with others.

Sex, age, job title, frequency of usage, and length of usage do not seem to be significant factors in shaping attitudes. Age is not very important.

Some of the findings of this study contradict public opinion. Those areas should be retested. As was pointed out earlier, the relationship between length of terminal use and attitudes towards the terminal need to be reexamined. This study shows that there is no improvement in the efficiency of writing as a result of the length of using the terminal.

Table No. 11

Relationship Between Profile and Attitude Towards the Terminal as a Writing Tool

	Sex	Age	Business Type	Length Of Usage	Typing Skills	Location Of Terminal
Long Hand						
Dictating						
Keyboarding						X
Creativity			X			X
Terminal is cold, en-joyable						X
Own terminal would make a difference					X	
Increased/ decreased writing			X		X	X
Sharing of ideas			X			X
Conciseness					X	
Inputting of Information		X				
Planning			X			
Organizing			X		X	X
Revising		X				
Length of Time use for writing	X			X	X	

Another surprising finding was that younger people are not necessarily more eager to write on the terminal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Each business has to study how to best introduce the terminal into its particular environment.

2. A few token terminals seem not to achieve very much. It should be examined whether terminals which are shared are a positive expense, or whether companies really do have to go the whole way and put computers on everyone's desk.

3. Companies should provide keyboarding training for employees who are expected to work with terminals since the keyboarding skills level does influence attitudes towards the microcomputer.

4. Some of the findings should be retested since they contradict popular belief. In this group are: length of terminal use and attitude, age and terminal use, type of business and attitudes.

5. It is recommended to repeat the study with a larger sample. Also, the questionnaire should be revised based on this study.

USE OF VIDEO DISPLAY TERMINAL FOR COMMUNICATING
IN BUSINESS

The results of this questionnaire will be used to study the use of terminals in communication. We would very much appreciate your help in providing information by answering the following questions. Please complete the questionnaire by using a check mark to indicate the most appropriate answer(s).

1. Please give the following information:
   a. Sex: ___Male ___Female

   b. Age: ___under 21 ___36-40 ___51-55
   ___21-15 ___41-45 ___56-60
   ___26-30 ___46-50 ___61 plus
   ___31-35

   c. Type of business firm:
   ___Agriculture ___Other Professional Services
   ___Insurance ___Public Utilities
   ___Local Government ___Information Management
   ___Legal Services ___Other Non-Manufacturing

   d. What is your job title?

   ___Supervisor ___Manager ___Systems Analyst/Designer
   ___President ___Programmer ___Instructor/Trainer
   ___Admin. Ass't. ___Project Leader ___Other_____

2. On the average, I use the terminal to type letters, reports, and/or other types of information approximately
   ___1-3 times daily. ___7-9 times daily.
   ___4-6 times daily. ___10 or more times daily. (Give approximate number)___

3. I have used a terminal for
   ___1-2 months. ___13 to 2 years.
   ___3-6 months. ___25 months to 3 years.
   ___7-12 months. ___Over 3 years (Specify number of years)___

4. What type of training in keyboarding (typing), if any, have you had?
   ___I had a typing course in high school/college.
   ___I learned how to type in an adult education class.
   ___I had a training course in typing on the job.
   ___I have not had any formal training in typing.

5. My keyboarding (typing) skills are
   ___Excellent (know proper fingering for the keyboard, type rapidly, seldom make typing errors).
   ___Good (know proper fingering, have fairly good speed, make minimal number of typing errors).
   ___Fair (know proper fingering, type slowly, make more than average number of errors).
   ___Poor (use "hunt and peck" system, type slowly, make too many errors).

6. Which of the following applies to you?
   ____I have a terminal at my desk to use whenever I need to use it.
   ____I share the use of a terminal with 1-3 people.
   ____I share the use of a terminal with more than 3 people.

7. I prefer to
   ____Work in longhand and have secretary type my work.
   ____Dictate using a recorder/have typing done by word processing.
   ____Dictate to a secretary.
   ____Keyboard myself.

8. I am more creative
   ____Using paper and pencil.
   ____Using the terminal.
   ____Dictating to a secretary.
   ____Dictating to a recording device.

9. Which best expresses your feelings about the use of terminals?
   ____I am apprehensive about terminals.
   ____I feel threatened by terminals.
   ____Terminals are cold and impersonal.
   ____Terminals help in personalizing my communications.
   ____I enjoy using a terminal.
   ____Terminals help me in communicating faster and more efficiently.
   ____Other_____

10. If you share a terminal with more than one person, would your attitude towards the use of a terminal differ if you had one at your desk?
   ____I would feel more positive about using a terminal.
   ____I don't mind sharing the use of a terminal with others.
   ____I dislike using terminals.
   ____Other (Please explain)_____

11. How is the information typed by you printed?
   ____I have a printer at the desk.
   ____The unit shares one printer.
   ____The printer is in a central location.
   ____Other (Please explain)_____

12. The use of a terminal
   ____Has increased the number of my written communications.
   ____Has decreased the number of my written communications.
   ____Has held constant the number of my written communications.

13. Use of the video display terminal to produce written communications has
   ____Increased the sharing of ideas with colleagues.
   ____Discourages the sharing of ideas with colleagues.
   ____Does not change the frequency of sharing ideas.

14. When using the terminal for communicating, I believe I am
   ____More concise
   ____Less concise
   ____Inhibited in the flow of ideas
   ____Relaxed

15. I use the terminal to keyboard (check all that apply)
    ____Business letters sent outside of the company.
    ____Inter-office memos and letters.
    ____In-house business reports.
    ____Reports sent outside of the company.
    ____Other (Please explain)_____

16. Before I input information, I
    ____Put key points on a piece of paper.
    ____Make a detailed outline.
    ____Write key paragraphs out in long hand.
    ____Write entire report out in longhand.
    ____Compose on the keyboard and do not make any notes.

17. I find it easier to
    ____Plan with pencil and paper.
    ____Put the plan on the video display terminal.

18. I find it easier to organize the flow of thought and presentation
    ____On paper.
    ____On the terminal.

19. I revise material
    ____Always on a printout.
    ____Always directly on the screen.
    ____Sometimes on the printout.
    ____Sometimes on the screen.

20. Using the terminal to prepare my communications
    ____Takes less time than the method I used previously.
    ____Seems to take about the same time as I spent previously.
    ____Takes more time than the method I used previously.

NOTE: Please attach or staple to this questionaire a sample of a <u>recent</u> business letter or memo that was written by you. Please block out any confidential information. You may also block out your company name, if you desire.

RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE ATTACHED SAMPLE OF YOUR COMMUNICATION TO:

Dr. Jean Grever & Dr. Iris Varner
Department of Business Education and
Administrative Services
Illinois State University
Normal, IL 61761

Communications and Revolution in the Airlines

Roy Dale Voorhees
Iowa State University

I. Introduction

Today new competition and challenges confront the airline industry because of two revolutions. The first revolution has been brought about by deregulating and new internal price (intra modal) competition within the airline industry. The second revolution springs from the external competition arising from developments in the telecommunications and electronics industry. Each revolution is powerful and alone would produce fundamental structural changes; together they are having a synergistic effect and may produce the most profound changes the airline industry has ever experienced. Each of these changes will be examined.

II. Background

Since early in its history, the airline industry has been a classic example of an industry with both an elastic and inelastic demand. The classic definition of demand elasticity is that it (elasticity) can be measured by the change(s) in the quantity of the good or service demanded as the price of the good or service is changed. Thus for an elastic demand, the quantity demanded will increase as the price decreases and visa versa. The pleasure passenger segment of the airline industry demand curve is elastic. It does reflect inverse changes in the quantity of the service demanded in response to changes in price. This elastic demand has long been recognized by the air carriers and the Civil Aeronautics Board. Since about 1960, the CAB frequently has sanctioned pricing experiments and practices to attract more of the elastic segment of the industry's market by reductions in fares. Most of the regulated carriers have used some version of it to improve their load factors and rates of return. Typical of these price experiments have been half price fares to attract the spouse (pleasure passenger) of the business traveler to "fly along", attractive vacation fares for college students, persons in the military service, and many others. These experiments have been successful and have borne out the theory e.g., demand, or load factors, increased as prices were decreased. The reverse implication of these experiments has always been that price increases would decrease the quantity demanded.

The inelastic segment of the airline market has been primarily the business or professional traveler - the traveler who uses air travel only as a tool of business. For the business person, air travel is simply another economic input into the production of goods and services and it becomes just another cost item of conducting business. Historically, for this segment of travel, the quantity of service demanded has not decreased when air fares have been increased. The major reason for this is the fact that elasticity of the demand for air transportation is dependent upon the demand elasticity of the final product which is the result of the business travel. Thus, typically, a business traveler traveling across the country on even a small $5,000-$10,000 sale, negotiation, or contract would not have traveled more or less if there were a substantial change in the airfare.

There are several key questions for the future. One is whether this inelastic segment of the airline market, which has been historically insensitive to price increases, will continue to be inelastic? Or will it, at last, in the face of continued price increases and a new cheaper substitute (communications), experience a decrease in quantity - and thereby become also elastic? Another is, what effect will deregulation have on this potential substitution?

III. Deregulation and the new internal (intramodal) competition

The initial purpose of the Deregulation Act of October 1978 was to place maximum reliance on the competitive forces of the airline marketplace. It was intended that competition would gradually replace 40 years of regulation (1930-1978) as a method of providing and insuring efficient service to the public.[1] To be sure, competition is not new to the airline market; but competition in the past has been almost exclusively over "service & image", while prices have been held substantially identical by the regulatory process.[2] Structural changes in the industry resulting from the new found freedom of price competition are just becoming apparent. As a result of increased fuel costs (Figure 1), the trunk and longer distance carriers are shifting their strategy, under the freedom granted by deregulation, from the shorter route markets to the longer route markets which have a greater fuel efficiency and profit potential. Figure 2 illustrates the relative fuel consumption for varying distances - emphasizing the greater fuel consumption for short route distances.

The combined effects of greatly increased fuel costs and fuel inefficiencies make short stage routes very much more expensive to operate. Their expense has caused carriers to move from the short routes. This movement has become pronounced. Between July 1, 1978 and August 15, 1980, a total of 262 towns and cities have lost at least one certificated airline's passenger service. Analysis indicates that 29 locations are losing two such airlines and seven are losing three certificated carriers.[5]

Examples of this shift in strategy are United Airlines and Delta, both of which have announced plans to abandon gradually over the next several years, routes of less than 500 miles. There are two major results of this shift. The first is price competition on longer-haul markets, which has become intense on the transcontinental markets. For example, Eastern, TWA, American and United offered $99.00 one-way fares on the New York - West Coast route from June to October 1980 when Eastern and TWA discontinued this offering. From October 1980, and still continuing in February 1981, United and American have offered night round-trip fares from New York to San Francisco for $298.00 which is still a bargain fare. The second result is a service vacuum developing in the short haul markets.

Recognizing this problem on the shorter routes, the CAB ruled on 14 May 80 to allow airlines to raise fares, on an interim basis without CAB approval, for routes as long as 200 miles by unrestricted amounts; on routes from 201-400 miles by as much as 50%; and on routes longer than 400 miles by 30%. This increase in authorized fares was based on the need for airlines to cover increasing fuel costs for short route operations and to also encourage the substitution of new fuel efficient equipment by the commuter carriers on these routes.

Although commuter airlines, with more fuel efficient equipment, may in the long run move into these short route markets, the immediate effect of reduced service and projected abandonments has been to increase still further the costs of travel by air. In the long run, this may encourage substitution of other modes of transport for air on the shorter routes. Thus, there are two results from deregulation: (1) Increased competition (inter-modal) on the shorter route markets and a concomitant strategic shift by established carriers to get out of those markets and into the longer routes. (2) Increased intra-modal price competition among the established carriers on the longer routes.

IV. New (non-modal) competition from the telecommunication industry

Historically, there have been many examples of major competitive breakthroughs, not from within an industry, but from without. These external breakthroughs have involved fundamental changes in business activity. Levitt has stated, "Revolutions are seldom made by insiders."[6] An example he cites (along with many others) involves ocean-cargo containerization. McLean Trucking Company's president is identified as the person envisioning ships as "bridges" for trucks. This innovation, which has had a significant impact on ocean-going transportation practices, did not originate from the traditional firms in the ocean shipping industry. Another example of a revolution originating outside of what seemed at the time to be an impregnable industry, involved the Hollywood movie industry when confronted by the fledgling television industry.

The stage now appears set for still another breakthrough. The airline industry faces a threat from the telecommunications industry. It is posing major new external competition to the airline industry primarily for its business travel market - the inelastic segment of the market traditionally insensitive to price changes. That competition is based on the idea of substituting communications service for transportation - an old idea which dates from the substittuion of the telegraph for The Pony Express. Its time has come in a strong rush compelled and driven by the economics of the two industries.

Although there has always been business travel, it may be well to remember that very long (i.e. transcontinental or internal) business travel on a routine basis is a recent (post WW II) phenomenon. Before that time, long distance business was conducted by means of communication and perhaps rarely by travel. Travel was very expensive in terms of time, money and effort. For example, long distance business travelers were reluctant to spend the better part of a week crossing the continent on a train for a few hours of face to face communications and then the better part of another week returning. Certainly overseas or international business travel was even more restricted. Normally, long distance business was conducted by correspondence (mail) and occasionally by telegraph. It was the speed and comfort of air travel, at a relatively inexpensive price in the post WW II era, that first made long distance business travel popular and routine. And now that travel is again becoming comparatively expensive, and its potential substitute, telecommunications, is becoming cheaper, increasing substitution of telecommunications for travel is to be expected.

Business travel's basic purpose, of course, is instantaneous interactive communications between two or more parties. One method of producing this link is to physically transport a human corpus (presumably containing an intellect) to the same physical location as the other party(ies). The parties can then communicate face to face and provide interactive comment and reaction to

facilitate a completed transaction, i.e., sale, agreement, diagnosis, contract, or whatever. This is the product or end result of business travel. Recent developments in communications, facilitating the substitution of communications for business travel, offers the same opportunity for interactive communication and completed transactions between parties without physically transporting, feeding, and lodging the corpii at a distant location by simply linking the intellects through some communication medium.

V. The Economics Underlying the Substitution of Telecommunications for Business Travel

For purposes of comparing telecommunications and business travel as methods of communications, one must examine all the cost components of business travel. They essentially are meals, lodging, local transportation (auto rental for local use), and intercity (air) travel costs. Business travel costs, excluding intercity travel costs, have been compiled for eight years by Sales and Marketing Management which also has constructed them into a Selling Cost Index (SCI). The Selling Cost Index (SCI) is calculated by "costing out" a typical five-day week for a salesperson in each of 80 U.S. metropolitan markets. The business traveler's expenses are computed for his three basic costs: meals (including two drinks a day), single-room lodging, and auto rental for local use. These costs, illustrated in Figure 3, have been rising very fast.[7] These costs do not include intercity travel.

Figure 4 illustrates intercity travel costs (air fares) and telephone costs in comparison to the CPI. When air fare is considered along with the other costs of travel i.e., reflected by the selling cost index, it is clear that the total costs of business travel are increasing at a very rapid rate. It is also clear that the costs for communications are increasing much more slowly. Very importantly, the advantage enjoyed by communication services over airline fares increases every time there is an increase in the price of fuel. The latest (February 1981) OPEC price increase, as well as the probable price increase from domestic oil deregulation, will probably result in a still greater price advantage for communications services.

Figure 5 illustrates the past and projected total business travel costs reflected in Figures 3 and 4 and compares them to communication costs. Clearly, communications enjoys a very favorable comparison.

VI. Behavioral Implications of Teleconferencing

In many ways, the question of human acceptance may represent a problem fully as serious as the development of the technology. Acceptance of telecommunications by individuals is likely when it provides access to new sources of information or entertainment. However, teleconferencing will not provide new information but supply the same old information through a different technological scenario.

Teleconferencing, like so much in business, is a tradeoff. It can bring large savings in time and travel costs. But it can also reduce and inhibit human contact. Meetings probably will become more formal and more of a show put on for the participants. Participants probably will be better prepared but much of the informal banter and informal human intercourse of face-to-face meetings probably will be reduced if not eliminated. There will be no winks, nods, and

touches that are so important among participants. But the cost advantages of teleconferencing are so considerable that it seems almost certain that the new technology will replace many face-to-face meetings regardless of the loss in human contact. Business leaders of the future probably will have taken course work, as a part of their business education, on how to communicate effectively via television.

A step towards the new technology is the implementation of interactive, audiovisual communications. The American Telephone and Telegraph Company's (AT&T) entry into this mode of telecommunication is called Picturephone Meeting Service, or PMS. There are PMS centers in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., and PMS Conferees must use one of these centers.[12] Some motels (Holiday Inn) and hotels are rushing to install PMS Conference facilities. At these conference facilities, an organizational group may confer with its counterpart parties at a distant location.

VII. Conclusions

There are two main revolutionary competitive forces acting on the airline industry. The first is deregulation, which has encouraged service abandonments and intermodal competition on the short routes. As airlines have made strategic shifts into the longer, less fuel sensitive routes, intensified intramodal price competition has developed. At the same time, the airline industry is threatened by an external competitive threat from the telecommunications and electronic industries. This threat is based on the economic substitution of communications service for business travel. Business travel is based substantially on long distance intercity air travel, the inelastic segment of the air industry. In the past, the inelastic segment has been the more profitable segment of the industry and has been used to subsidize the other less profitable segments. Thus, the decreased demand for the inelastic segment, along with the effects of deregulation, which increases the need for cross subsidies, poses serious future competitive threats to the airline industry. Indeed, the two forces are already well underway. Only the unfolding of the future will reveal how serious these threats become and how the airline industry will respond to this new competitive challenge.

Footnotes

[1]Air Deregulation Act of 1978. See opening statement, "To place maximum reliance on competitive market forces."

[2]Nawal K. Tonya, "The Commercial Airline Industry." (Lexington, Massachusetts, D.C. Heath and Co., 1976), 62-72.

[3]Air Transport Association; also, Wall Street Journal, August 22, 1980.

[4]The Fuel Efficiency for Various Stage Lengths was developed by Paul Hamilton (FAA-AEE 200), 800 Independence Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20591.

[5]Research Review, "A Special Report on Transportation Developments," American Trucking Association, Inc., Washington, D.C., September 15, 1980, Number 226.

[6]Theodore Levitt, Marketing for Business Growth, McGraw-Hill, New York, New York, 1974, 89.

[7]William Carley, "Every Climbing Air Fares Cut into Travel, Raising Prospect of Long Slump for Carriers," Wall Street Journal, February 6, 1981, section 2, 17.

[8]Sales and Marketing Management, "S & MM's Selling Costs Index, Bill Publication: New York, New York, February 1980, 10-11.

[9]Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, May 30, 1980.

[10]Data through 1979 based on Consumer Price Index compiled by U.S. Department of Labor. Data from 1980-1985 based on assumptions and projections by AT&T to wit: automobile, hotel, and meal increases of 6% per year, telephone 6%, air fares 20%.

[11]Jack Hilton, "Adjusting to Office Television," Wall Street Journal, January 12, 1981, section 1, 16.

[12]National Transportation Policy Study Commission, "National Transportation Policies Through the Year 2000," U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, June 1972, 105.

Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1 - Average Fuel Prices Paid by Airlines

Figure 2 - B727 Fuel Efficiency

Figure 3 - Selling Costs Index (SCI)

Figure 4 - Airline Fares and Telephone Service Costs Compared to CPI

Figure 5 - Comparative Costs for Business Travel and Communications

Tables

Table 1 - Displacement of Business Travel by Teleconferencing

Figure 1

Average Fuel Price
Paid by Airlines[3]
(In cents per gallon)

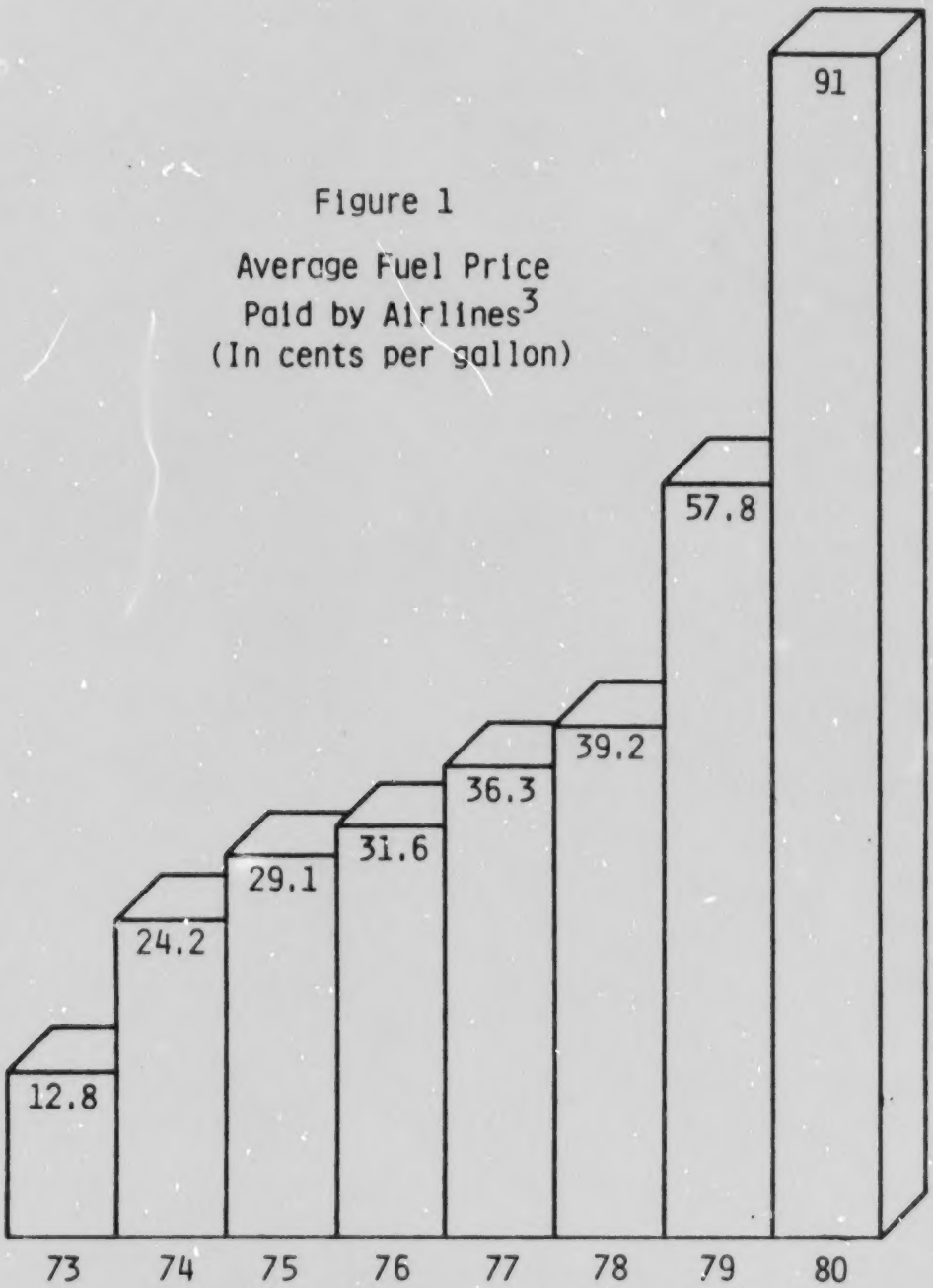


Figure 2

B727 Fuel Efficiency
by Stage Length[4]

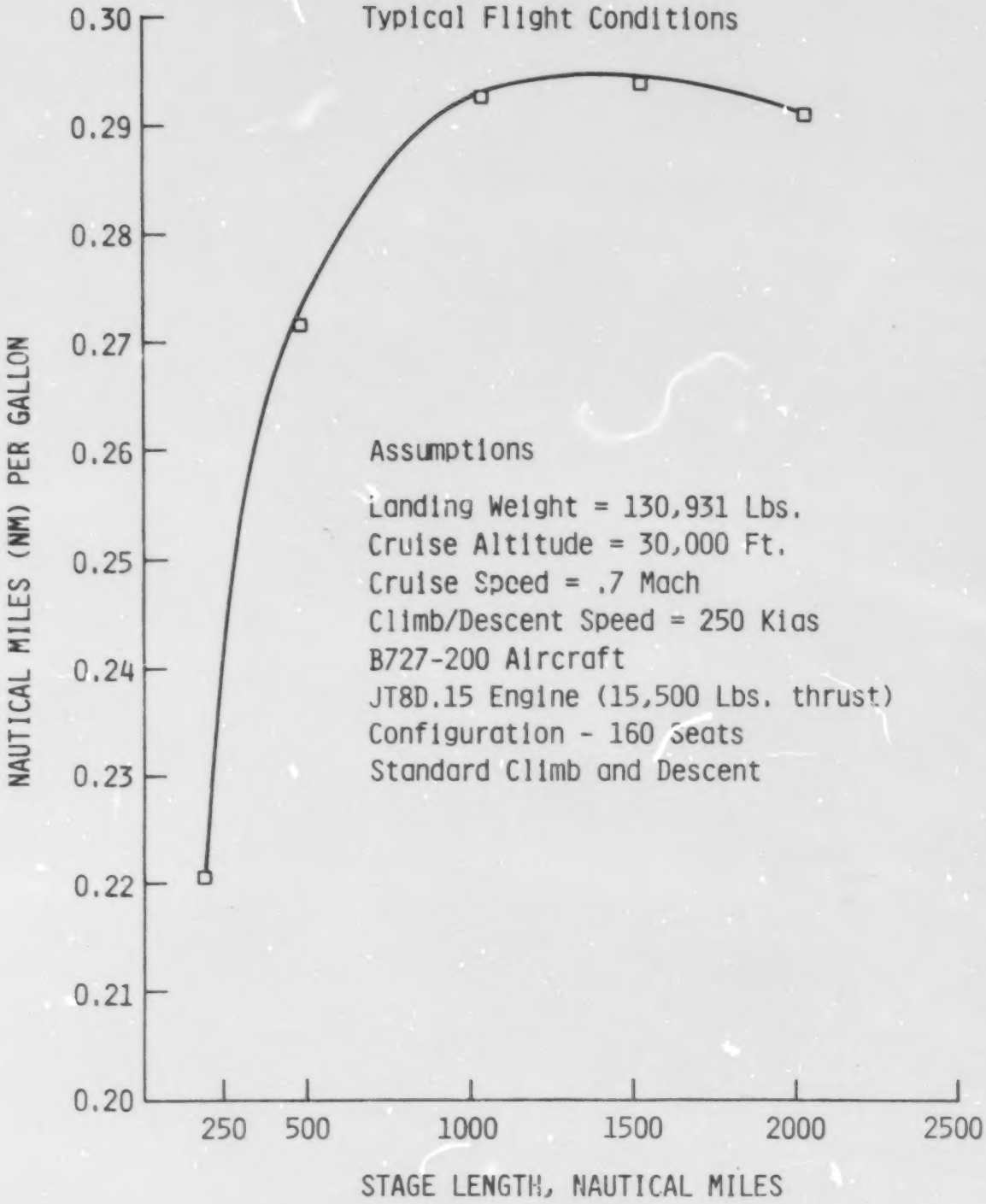


Figure 3

Selling Costs Index (SCI)[8]
1971 = 100

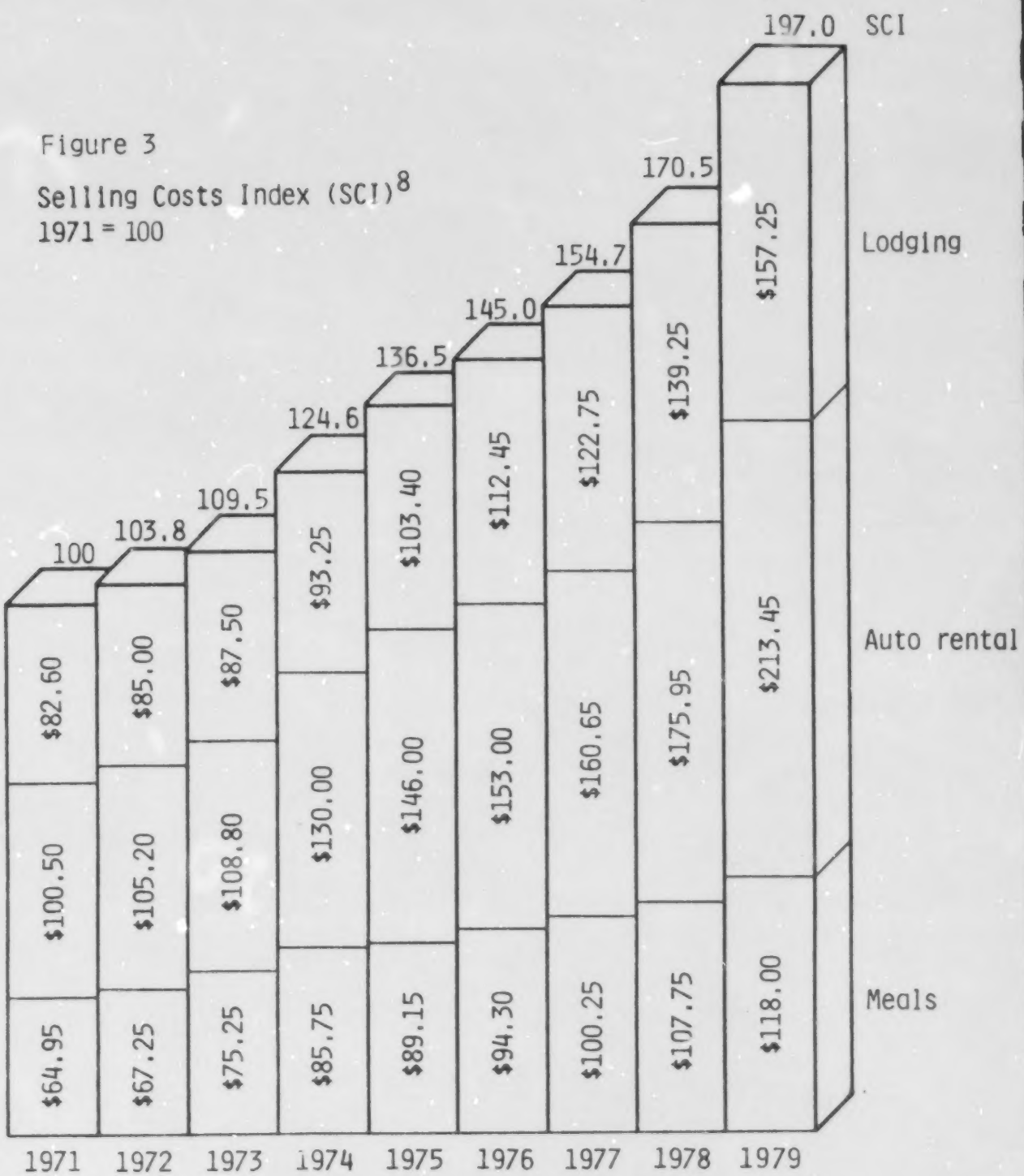


Figure 4

Airline Fare and Telephone Service Costs Compared to CPI[9]

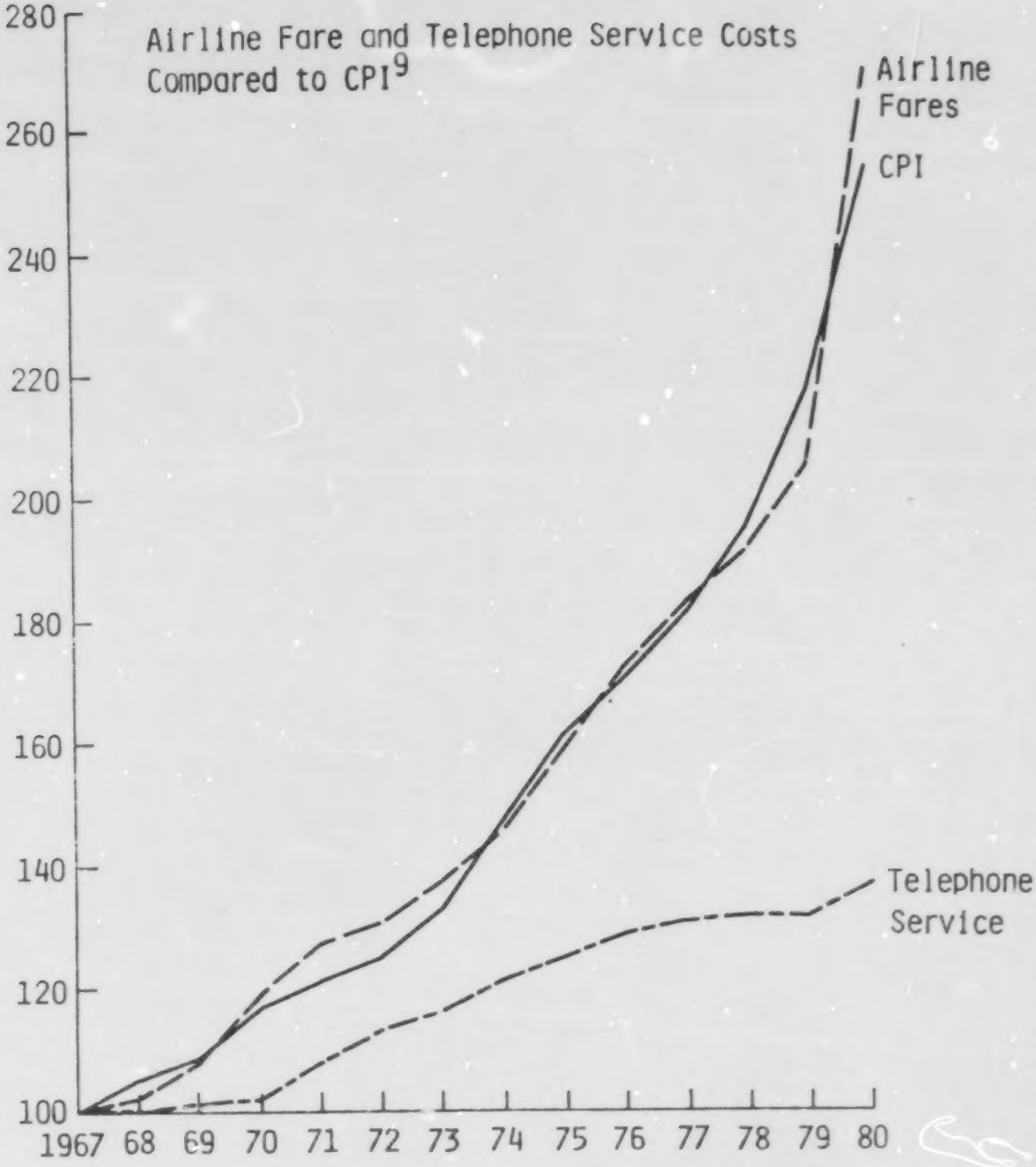
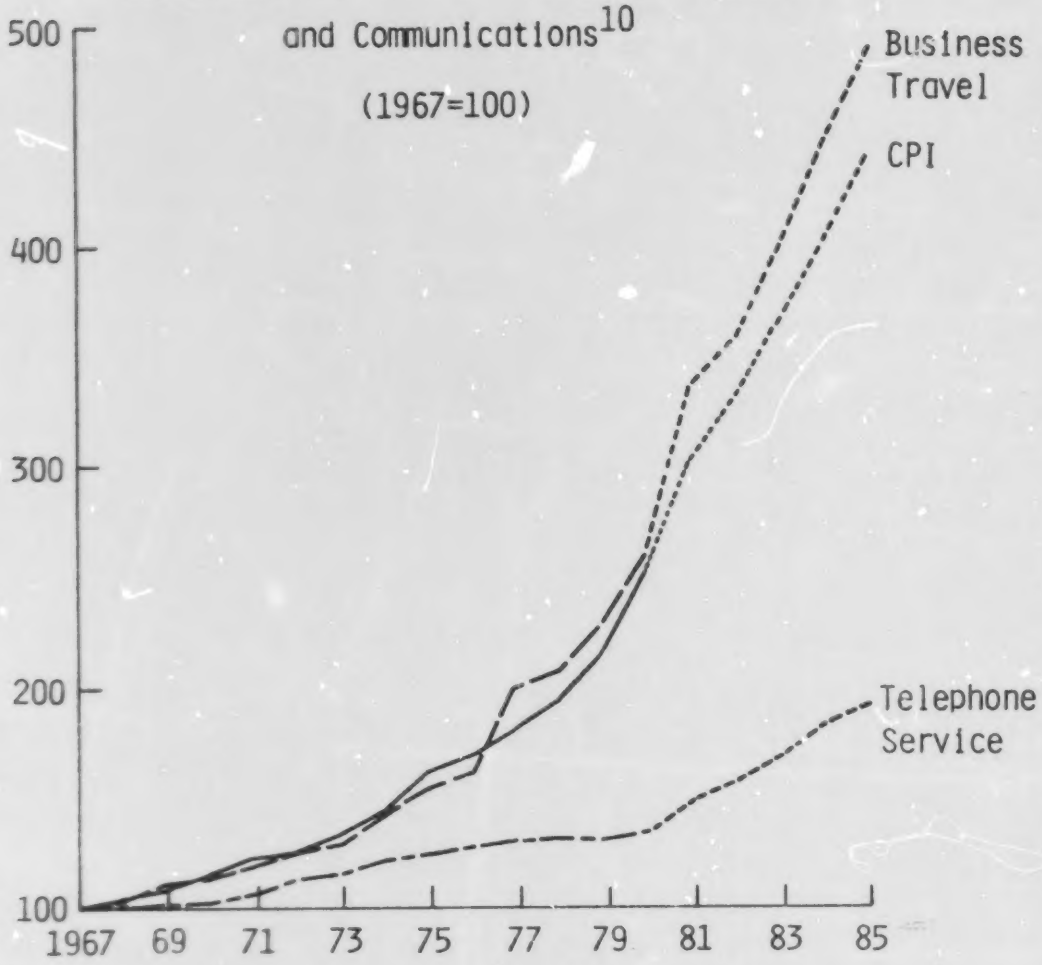


Figure 5

Comparative Costs for Business Travel and Communications[10]

(1967=100)



AN ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS IN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Michael W. Winchell, Illinois State University

ABSTRACT

This paper identified the most common reports generated by financial institutions, the degree of structure of those reports and the latitude of decision making by the report preparer. Also identified were the major weaknesses of employees' report writing skills as perceived by their supervisors.

Results of the study suggest that personnel within banking institutions believe they could benefit themselves and improve the images of their institutions by updating their skills in written communications.

INTRODUCTION

Since a major complaint of employers is the need for beginning employees to be better communicators, identification of writing styles, formats and commonalities peculiar to specific segments of the business community to which Illinois State University students might apply for employment was sought. Initial investigation of this topic was centered on public accounting firms.

During the school year of 1981-82, a select group of public accounting firms was asked to provide information relative to their expectations of the writing skills of employees who had been with their firms for three or fewer years. Those firms provided information which focused on the kinds of writing situations encountered by new employees and significant characteristics of those writings.

The characteristics deemed most significant by those public accountants interviewed were accuracy and conciseness. Also described as characteristics of significance were documentation, neatness, timeliness and tone. Those same public acccountants identified the kinds of reports most frequently written by their new employees as: memos, management letters, statements of opinion, research reports, audit reports and special reports. Also reported was the impact the report writing performance makes on the evaluation of the new employee's success with the firm. That impact was considered significant or highly significant by all accountants interviewed.

As an expansion of the writing issues dealing with public accountants, I investigated another segment of employers of Illinois State University students; namely, financial institutions. Once again interest focused on the kinds of writing requirements, the significant characteristics of those writings and the relative impact the writing performance of the new employees has on the success of the employee with the firm.

The segments of this report which follow contain information provided by the financial institution officers who participated in the study and analysis of that information by the researcher.

REPORT TYPES

For each of the institutions which participated in this study there was a wide variety of kinds of reports required. These report kinds also varied in terms of the frequency of requirement; varying from daily reports to annual reports. However, the most common report types are discussed below. Additionally, many of the reports required in large banks are not required in smaller banks because the information is disseminated orally.

Intra Office or Intra Bank Memos

The memo is by far the report most frequently required of the employees of the banks which participated in the study. While the memos followed the pattern of the typical memo and had the usual standard parts (To, From, Subject and Date), the effectiveness of the report lies in the wording selected for use in attempting to convey the message. The memo report is used to cover a variety of topics. In some of the participating organizations some of the reports which are written in memo format are assigned other labels of identification. These labels of identification were determined by the function of the report. Hence, within this study readers will note certain reports which are discussed under one heading while in the reader's specific organization reports dealing with that same or similar topic would be considered a memo report. Understandability is the key consideration in the preparation of these reports.

Budget Reports

For those banks sufficiently large enough to warrant the establishment of budgets for individual departments, the person in charge of

each department is required to furnish bank officers with a budget report for his/her department. There is no latitude for individual writing skills in the preparation of this report. Neatness and accuracy are the essential considerations for this report.

Letter Reports

For those bank employees who have direct contact with customers of the bank, the most important report is the letter report. These reports follow the format of a regular business letter and contain the standard business letter parts of return address, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close, typed signature and typist's initials. Most common topics discussed in this report are new services offered by the bank, a credit recommendation or an attempt to collect money owed to the bank. The overriding concerns in the writing of these reports are that they be understandable and tactful.

Regulatory Reports

While this report is generated with a high degree of regularity (daily, monthly or quarterly) it is a highly structured report which allows for no flexibility. Its purpose is to compare current performance to past performance in an attempt to isolate areas of greater and lesser productivity. Also, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) requires holding companies to submit certain regulatory reports. Since there is a standard form used for these reports, neatness and accuracy are the key considerations in the preparation of regulatory reports.

Board Reports

The board report is one of the more crucial internal reports and one the more formal reports generated for use within a given bank. The

purpose of this report is to provide the bank's Board of Directors with information to be used in the decision-making process which determines the various areas in which the bank will concentrate its efforts as the economy and bank customers' needs change. Because of the length of some of these reports, the ability to condense, yet retain logic and organization, is crucial to the strength of the board report. Therefore, organization and conciseness are of prime importance in the preparation of these reports.

Officer Reports

All bank officers receive these reports Primarily, they contain balance sheet and income statement information. As with all reports comprised essentially of numbers, the primary considerations in the preparation of these reports are the neatness and accuracy of these reports.

Comparative Reports

Each bank assesses its position in each type of market activity to the positions of each of its major competitors within each of those same market activities. This comparison permits each bank to isolate those areas of activity where it is doing well and those areas of activity where it is not doing well. Based on this type of information the bank's officers will determine which areas need maintenance of position and which areas need additional development and improvement. These reports require extreme care in their preparation to assure the neatness and accuracy of the information. While this report draws no conclusions nor makes any recommendations, it is a major report which deals not

only with figures within a given bank but also the relative success of competing banks.

Reports of Condition

Although the reports of condition are a type of report which has a high frequency of preparation (written daily and compiled monthly), there is little opportunity for report writer's creativity. Standard accounting principles are followed in the preparation of these reports. Hence, the format of these reports is highly structured with little latitude for discretion in preparation. Acccuracy and neatness are the prime concerns for the preparer of reports of condition.

Informational Reports

Throughout the bank each department requires information which can be used in the decision-making process. These reports are termed information reports and are usually structured to meet the individual needs of each department. Among the information items included in this type of report is the highly significant forecast data. This data is presented as fact with interpretations comprising conclusions and the frequent inclusion of recommendations. Whether the reports include recommended courses of action is determined by the structure of the individual banks. These reports require the report writer to use all of his/her writing skills to prepare a usable document. Of prime importance in the preparation of these reports is organization and consistency of analysis to facts presented. This organization and consistency of analysis are crucial to the understanding by the audience of the material and explanation presented.

Call Reports

The least structured of all regularly prepared reports is the call report. These reports are summaries of bank-initiated contact with a customer or prospective customer. The purpose of the call report is the recording of the facts of the contact with an audience external to the bank and the resulting activity. Since these reports are not structured in a specific format or style sense, the report writer must exercise individual discretion in the preparation of the reports. In the call report, the report writer must pay careful attention to the organization of the material such that the report retains understandability while yet being judicious in the volume of verbiage presented. Once the determination of which information to include and how to include it has been made the writer must arduously attend to the mundane but necessary concerns of writing mechanics; i.e. sentence structure, word usage, and spelling.

Management Trainee Reports

For those banks which have a management training program (and most of the larger ones do) the trainees are required to prepare a management trainee report at the end of the training period. The structure and style of these reports are decided individually by each of the trainees. The overall purpose of the report is to provide management with the trainee's perception of the experiences and knowledges gained during the training period.

This report provides the trainee with opportunity to display his/her interests in various functional activities of the bank as well as individual writing skills. Because of the tremendous impact this report can have on the initial placement within the bank of the trainee, it is

essential that the writing skills display the logical organization of material and the attention to detail that is required for advancement within the bank's structure.

WRITING TRAITS

Those bank executives who participated in this study provided insight to areas of their concern with regard to the writing traits evidenced by the new employee in their organizations. Noteworthy initially was the total agreement by this researcher's respondent population that written communications problems are not confined to any one department or area of activity of the banks but rather is a total institutional problem requiring attention on the parts of all bank management personnel. Below are the areas of writing difficulty most frequently assessed by bank management.

Mechanics

The overall term of mechanics is used to apply to the technical traits common to all good writing. Mechanics is not concerned with the content message but rather is concerned with the mundane tasks of complete sentences, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. It is sometimes the opinion of the new employee that content of ideas will supercede mechanical aspects of a report as it is read by coworkers or that someone on the secretarial staff will correct any errors in mechanics. Neither of these assumptions proved to be consistent with bank management personnel's beliefs. While the message or content of the report was deemed most significant, it was expected that there would be no mechanical errors.

Audience Analysis

A second major area of concern of those officials responding for the writings of new employees was the lack of sensitivity by the writer for the position of the reader. It is rather commonplace for the new employee to assume a greater understanding of the immediate situation than might well exist; especially in the instances of writings to populations external to the bank.

Interestingly enough, this phenomenon was not restricted to new employees but rather seemed to permeate all levels of employees. The three most frequent complaints by management with regard to this area of employee writing were the overuse of acronyms and a brevity without substance or an excessively wordy message. For those populations external to the bank the use of banking jargon or acronyms made little sense and, therefore, actually deterred from the message intended.

In the instances of brevity, the writer assumed that his/her reader would be as familiar with the point of discussion as was the writer. This frequently led to an inadequate explanation of the situation and, hence, a failure to communicate.

Some employees were prone to go to the opposite extreme and write a far more wordy and detailed report than was called for by the existing situation. This wordiness frequently led to frustration on the part of the reader in trying to discern the writer's meaning. Therefore, communication was as incomplete as in the instances of incomplete or overly brief reports.

Logic

A third area of perceived difficulty by bank management with the preparation of reports is the realm of report writer activity best

referred to as logic. It was reported that based on the facts presented the analysis of the data was inconsistent within itself and only loosely connected to the facts. Therefore, it was difficult to accept the explanation of the writer. As an additional difficulty of acceptance, was the problem managers had of determining how, based on the facts and analyses presented, the recommendations were eventually made. Primarily, the bank managers were asking for a logical flow from fact through analysis to recommendation in some readily understandable connection.

Organization

At first reading the complaints of bank managers about the organization of subordinates reports appeared to be part of the problem of logical writing. However, upon closer scrutinizing it appears that the area of writing referred to as organization is based on the concept of presenting an idea and presenting all information pertinent to that idea before introducing a new idea. The most frequent complaint registered about this writing trait was that the writer would present an idea then later in the paper offer more substantive material on that same topic. Most readers wanted a sequence of events based on time (order of happening), significance (most significant to least or vice versa), or some other readily recognizable sequence of events. Frequently, a reader's perception of a disorganized paper led the reader to perceive the writer as a disorganized person. This belief further led to the questioning of the writer's appropriateness in a higher level of responsibility.

SUMMARY

To recapitulate the information presented in this paper, bank management personnel identified the most common reports generated within their institutions as: memos, budget reports, letter reports, regulatory reports, board reports, officer reports, comparative reports, reports of condition, informational reports, call reports and bank management trainee reports. While some of these reports are highly structured and permit little or no latitude of decision-making by the writer, some reports are sufficiently open in terms of format and style. Therefore, the writer has opportunity to display writing skills and writing weaknesses.

The major writing weaknesses were identified under the comprehensive headings of: mechanics, audience analysis, logic and organization. Each of these aspects of writing difficulties was discussed in terms of its interference with understandability of the report and, hence, interference with the purpose of the report.

CONCLUSIONS

The preceding discussion of information provided by banking management personnel leads to the following conclusions with regard to the writing capabilities of their subordinates.

1. Too many mechanical errors exist in the writings. This leads management to question the ability to prepare a document or the care required to prepare a document which will make a good impression by a subordinate.

2. Many writers have a tendency to write for themselves rather than for their readers. That is the writers do not analyze their audiences in terms of what the audience wants with the information or already knows about the topic.

3. Frequently, there is no perceived logic in the reports written to connect facts with facts, facts

with interpretation or interpretation with recommendation. This would appear to be a result of a lack of sensitivity to the audience by the writer.

4. An overall organization of ideas is oftentimes lacking in the reports. The frustration which results from the reading of a poorly organized report leads managers to question subject matter expertise by the employee when usually that is not the case. The employee, generally, understands the topic but does such a poor job of organizing the material that he/she appears not to understand the topic.

While this paper does not purport to encompass all aspects of written communications within all banking institutions, it did delve sufficiently far into the types of reports written and the kinds of difficulties prevalent in those reports to lead on to suggest that banking personnel believe they could benefit themselves and improve their images within the banking industry by updating their skills in written communications. Department heads seek employees with good writing skills. However, during pre-employment screening it is far easier to detect poor writing skills than to detect the outstanding skills which are sought.

HOW TO WRITE A BOOK

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ABSTRACT

Writing a book is a 12-step process that begins with finding and developing an idea and ends with collecting the rewards. The steps in between, from selecting a co-author to compromising with reviewers and editors to proofreading galleys and page proofs require perseverance and a clear conception of the final goal. A sense of humor helps, too. Having written a book is the best part of the process.

Did you ever look at a book and think, "I could do it better"?

Or did you ever think, "What I need is a book that . . ."?

If so, you've had what it takes to write a book--at least you've had what it takes to start writing a book.

Writing a book is not difficult. But don't be fooled: it isn't easy, either. The process is long and time consuming. It can also be frustrating, disappointing, and ego-threatening. If you are willing to spend the time and energy required, and if you are willing to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous reviewers and editors, you can write a book.

Writing a book is a 12-step process (which gives new meaning to the term, "Dirty Dozen"). Most of the 12 steps apply regardless of the kind of book you wish to write, whether it's the Great American Novel, a mystery, a college textbook, or a handbook. We will focus on those steps required to publish a textbook, and we will assume that you want to have your book published by a real publisher who will sell it in bookstores and pay you royalties rather than a vanity press that will charge you to publish it and then expect you to sell it yourself.

We will explain how you can successfully complete each of the following steps:

1. Finding and developing an idea.
2. Deciding on and about co-authors.

3. Researching the market.
4. Writing the proposal.
5. Submitting the outline and sample chapters.
6. Interpreting the reviews.
7. Signing the contract.
8. Revising the first draft
9. Understanding the copy editor.
10. Proofreading galleys and page proofs.
11. Appreciating the product.
12. Collecting the rewards.

THE IDEA: GETTING IT, NURTURING IT

It's hard to write a book without an idea, though if you look at some of the books being published these days, you might have thought otherwise. Some of the ideas are big and impressive: Shakespeare wanted to examine the revenge motif, Milton wanted to justify the ways of God to man, and Melville wanted to explore concepts of good and evil.

Fortunately, it doesn't have to be a big idea. What <u>don't</u> you like about the book you are currently using? What is missing from the book you are currently using that you wish were there? Do you have any handout materials you're really proud of?

Any of these could be the beginnings of a book. Most of us have hundreds of ideas each week that could be turned into books, but usually we reject the idea as "not enough," or even if we recognize that it is a good idea, we fail to show it the respect it deserves: we fail to write it down.

Once we are in the habit of ignoring or rejecting ideas, our mind learns that idea-production is not a valued activity. Our minds work the same way any organism works: rewarded activities are repeated; unrewarded and punished activities are not.

It's an old analogy, but ideas are indeed like seeds. If they are to grow and take shape, they have to be planted, watered, fertilized, and pruned. An idea can only take root and grow if it is written down so that we can admire it, work with it, and add to it.

Get in the habit of committing your ideas to paper (or to magnetic disk). Once you let your mind know that you will take its ideas seriously, it will produce them in increasing numbers. You may change your mind about some of these ideas. That's okay. Paper can be burned, and magnetic disks can be erased. But do your criticizing <u>after</u> you've given the idea a change to take root and grow.

We are living in times of rapid and often unpredictable changes. Millions of books will be written about these changes. No one else shares your perspective of these changes, and no one else can write the book you were meant to write.

Commit your idea to writing. Add to it. Encourage related ideas to take shape around it. Envision it as part of a whole. Your entire book doesn't need to be unique, but you should be able to see how your

unique idea fits into a general scheme of things.

CO-AUTHORS: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

Perhaps you'll want a co-author. Co-authors are a mixed blessing. Most textbooks and many other works of nonfiction are written by more than one person these days--and usually for good reason. A typical textbook contains a great deal of information, and two or more writers can often do a better job of covering that information accurately and in time to meet a publisher's deadlines than one person could.

If you would like to write a book but aren't ready to do all the work by yourself, try to find someone who

1. Will keep promises. Will the person you are considering as a co-author complete materials on schedule? When the publisher wants four chapters on Tuesday and your two chapters are ready to mail, will your co-author deliver on schedule?
2. Understands the needs of the project. Can your intended co-author work independently? Co-authors need to discuss and agree on objectives for the project, but they shouldn't have to check continually to see if they are on target. If your co-author is responsible for Chapter 6, she or he should be able to write it without seeking constant advice.
3. Demonstrates initiative. Will your intended co-author work without being told? Only one thing is worse than having to nag somebody to attend to his or her responsibilities, and that is working with somebody who does only what he or she is told to do. Will you have to tell your co-author not only to write chapter 6 but also to write the review questions for the chapter? Will you be the one who has to collect all the examples because it never occurs to your co-author that examples might be useful? A good co-author doesn't need to be told what to do--he or she just does it.
4. Has skills in areas you do not. If you and your co-author have identical skills and interests, conflict is sure to result. One of you may be the Grand Idea person, while the other pays attention to details. One of you may be interested in X, whereas the other is concerned about Y. While both of you will eventually have to be responsible for everything, the writing and revising process will be smoother if each of you has something unique to contribute.
5. Is willing to compromise. If you are to finish your project, you and your co-author will need to compromise--with each other, with reviewers, and with editors. If you or your co-author is unwilling to compromise, you will never be able to finish.
6. Is positive, helpful, and energetic. Does the person you are considering have a good attitude about the creation process,

or is she or he an idea killer? Most of us are expert critics: we know how to find and expose weaknesses. A good co-author recognizes that all ideas are weak to begin with and that ideas should be allowed to grow before they are pruned.

In addition to these six attributes, you should remember the two Great Laws of co-authorship:

1. The difficulty of the task increases in direct proportion to the distance between the co-authors.
2. The difficulty of the task increases in direct proportion to the number of co-authors.

People who are physically separated by distance have a difficult time establishing the kind of routine communication that facilitates co-authorship. Electronic mail may help solve part of that problem, but co-authors should be able to sit down and discuss aspects of the project from time to time so that they can "get on the same wave length." Face-to-face discussion is still the best way to achieve this.

Multiple author teams seem like a good idea in the abstract. Each person has less work to do, and the marketing base increases with each person added to the team. In actuality, however, each person added to the team increases the chance that you will be working with someone who will fail to complete his or her material, who will refuse to meet deadlines, or who will plagiarize.

Choose a co-author in haste, and you'll repent at leisure.

THE MARKET: NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS

Every book has a target market. Who will buy your book (or have their students buy your book) for what reason? Publishers are in business to make a profit, and they can only make a profit on a book when it addresses the needs of a large enough target market. Only writers of serious fiction can ignore the market--and it's hard for a new writer to succeed with serious fiction for exactly that reason: serious fiction must establish its own market, and most publishers are unwilling to take that kind of risk.

Before you go very far in developing your idea, you should take a long, hard, and objective look at the potential market for your book. What books are currently filling the needs of your target audience? What topics do they cover? How do they cover those topics? Why should members of that target audience prefer your book to those already available?

The trick is to write a book that is similar to the most successful books in your area of interest and different from them at the same time. With a few notable exceptions, radically different books--whether in content, length, or style--do not often succeed.

If your book is too similar to those already on the market, however, reviewers and editors will naturally question your motives in writing the book and the chances it would have in displacing well established competitors.

On the other hand, if you have a radically different approach, you will need to prove that your approach is superior, and the review process will need to confirm that superiority. Every book is a risk for a publisher who must invest thousands of dollars to see whether a book will sell sufficient copies to turn a profit. Publishers naturally want to keep their risks to a minimum. They also know that radically new approaches may set the standards for the future. When successful, large risks return the greatest profits.

Your chances of success are greatest when you have a clear conception of your target market and its needs. Publishers can help you refine your view of that market because they know what books are selling to what audiences, but the initial responsibility of defining a target audience rests with the prospective author.

Do you intend to address the needs of an entire market population? Or do you plan to capture a specific segment of the market? Sometimes capturing a large portion of a small market is better strategy than capturing a small portion of a large market.

Remember, too, that the needs of the market are always changing. The market leaders today may well be the buggy whips of tomorrow. Those who can correctly anticipate the market's changing needs are sure to succeed.

THE PROPOSAL: DANCING IN THE DARK

Textbook publishers are always searching for new authors. Publishers need authors and books to be able to make a profit. The Reasearch and Development branch of publishing consists of ferreting out new authors and guiding them in the production of new books.

Before a publisher will be willing to invest a great deal of money in helping you produce a book, you will need to prove that you have an idea worthy of developing. If you wish to write a textbook, you will present that proof in a proposal. A proposal for a new book needs to be as well thought out as a proposal for a new restaurant, hotel, or bridge. Your proposal should demonstrate that you

1. Understand the concept of a target market and that you plan to address the needs of a specific audience. Textbooks, for example, should be centered on a specific course. For which course will your book be written? Is that course usually an upper-division or a lower-division course? What is your proposed readability level? Will your book have a chance of being used in any other courses?
2. Understand market trends. How has your tarket market changed in the last ten years? How is it likely to change in the next ten? What evidence do you have to support your view?

3. Understand the competition. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the successful books currently filling the needs of your target market? Which books are the most successful, and what is responsible for their success?
4. Have a clear conception of your objectives. How will your book be different from the competition, and in what way is that "differentness" better? How long will your book be? How many chapters will it contain? What will be covered in each chapter, and how will those chapters be sequenced?

Publishers know from experience that prospective authors who can provide clear and detailed answers to all these questions are likely to be able to finish writing a book. If you know where you are going, you have a better chance of arriving than if you merely start and hope to end up someplace.

THE OUTLINE AND SAMPLE CHAPTERS: ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

Your best way of demonstrating that you have planned adequately is to supplement your proposal with a complete outline, showing three or even four levels of division, and two or three sample chapters. (If your book is not a textbook, you can skip this step--you will need to submit a complete manuscript.)

The proposal shows your analytical abilities. It shows that you can see a problem and understand how to solve that problem. The outline and sample chapters show that you can convert that intellectual understanding into a real, physical product.

Your outline and chapters may be changed in the process of completing the book, but you should not consider the outline "tentative" or the chapters "rough drafts." Because you may not have a second chance to present your ideas, they should be as good and complete as you can possibly make them. Do not add handwritten notes in the margins. Do not "x" out passages for deletion. Your proposal, outline, and sample chapters should have the appearance of long and careful planning. Materials that seem to have been prepared hastily or carelessly will be looked at that way by editors and reviewers.

New authors should plan to submit the proposal, outline, and sample chapters at the same time. Publishers may grant more leeway to proven authors, but even well established authors need to complete most of--and the most difficult--steps in the process.

THE REVIEW PROCESS: THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING IS IN THE EATING

If your book is a textbook, the publisher will send your proposal, outline, and sample chapters to representatives of the target market you have selected. In exchange for a small fee, the reviewers will be asked to answer questions like the following:

1. Does the author understand the market?

2. Is the author's analysis of the competition accurate?
3. Does the author's outline cover the topics usually covered in your course?
4. What do you think of the author's writing style?
5. Is the readability level appropriate for your students?
6. Has the author included enough examples, and are the examples appropriate?
7. Are the end-of-chapter exercises appropriate for your students?

Because the fee paid to reviewers is usually small, no reviewer can afford to spend very much time examining your materials. The materials you send must be the best you are capable of. Reviewers will not often seek out hidden strengths. It's easier to comment on obvious weaknesses.

Reviewers are both a hazard and a help. If all your reviewers agree that your project will be a complete waste of time and money, you obviously will need to rethink, replan, and retry. Sometimes a different set of reviewers solicited by a different publisher will have a different opinion. You shouldn't give up just because your first effort results in rejection. Many a best seller had to overcome initial rejection.

If your reviewers are encouraging and offer advice for improvements, take that advice seriously. A reviewer may be more objective about your materials than you are. A good reviewer provides specific and detailed suggestions for improvement. Reviewers may not always state their needs explicitly, so you may need to read between the lines. Does a passage make a reviewer uncomfortable? Something in the passage needs work, but it may <u>not</u> be the part the reviewer commented on. Sometimes a reviewer has gone astray before he or she notes as much in the margin.

Reviewers may also simply not agree. One reviewer may say, "Do more of <u>A</u>." Another will say, "Eliminate <u>A</u>. It's a waste of time." One reviewer may like your writing style, while another hates it. Wide ranging differences of opinion can be confusing and unsettling. Remember that no book is likely to please everyone, so you should try to meet the needs of those reviewers who come closest to sharing your views. Minimize points of difference with other reviewers when possible, but concentrate on satisfying those who agree with you. If you try to please everyone, you may not please anyone.

THE CONTRACT: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

Book contracts are weighted in favor of the publisher. After all, it's the publisher's money. You may invest the time, blood, sweat, and tears, but publishers invest the money. Contracts are designed to protect that financial investment.

Most publishing contracts are standard. Basically, they state the following:

1. The author will submit a manuscript of so many thousands of words with a specific title by a specific date.
2. If the author doesn't do that, he or she will have to return all advance money and suffer other appropriate humiliation.
3. The author is responsible for the originality of the work and will have to go to court by her- or himself if anyone sues.
4. The author will provide any required permissions (for quoted materials, photographs, and the like) and any required ancillary materials (instructor's manual, transparency masters, cassette recordings, quizzes, and exams).
5. The publisher agrees to pay a certain percentage of the price charged the bookstore as a royalty to the author. Royalty percentages vary from about 8 to 10 percent (for paperbound books) to 15 to 20 percent (for clothbound books) depending on the size of the market, the reputation of the author, and anticipated production costs.
6. The publisher may agree to provide a grant or an advance on royalties to offset the author's cost of producing the manuscript.
7. The author agrees to revise the book, or to permit the publisher to have the book revised, if the publisher deems the book worth revising.

Although the contracts are weighted heavily in favor of the publisher, most publishers live by the spirit--rather than the letter--of the law. You can, for example, be late with your manuscript as long as you are showing reasonable progress. Publishers want your manuscript to become a book, and once you have signed a contract, they will do their best to work with you to achieve that objective.

Once you have signed a contract, your greatest hazard (assuming that you are producing materials on schedule and that your reviewers stay happy) will come from the lack of stability in the publishing industry. Editors change jobs about as frequently as the rest of us change socks. Publishing houses go broke, are bought out, and undergo major reorganization.

While writing one of our books, we had six different editors, each with different opinions. Another of our books was killed by a new editor at one publishing company, so we had to find a new publisher for it. The publishing industry currently lacks stability. Never sign a contract with a publisher because you like one of the editors. That person will probably be working somewhere else by the time you finish your book.

Look instead at the books the company has already produced. Is that the way you want your book to look? Also look closely at the company's marketing strategy. Do not take seriously promises that a company will do more for you than they have for other authors in the past. It's the track record that counts. What kind of job has the

publisher done advertising the books it currently has on the market? Does the publisher attend appropriate conventions? Have you seen ads for other books published by that company? How often do you see that company's area sales representative?

A company is not likely to change its basic marketing strategy just because of your book, and you should be especially suspicious of any company that promises to do so. Also be susupcious if a company has 14 other books in your area of interest. Does the company market them all equally, or does it focus all its marketing attention on one or two? That company may be trying to tie up the competition. Look for a publisher that needs a book in your area of interest.

REVISING: SEPARATING THE BABY AND THE BATH

You should expect to prepare at least two complete versions of your manuscript. You will produce the first version in blocks of three to six chapters, sending your materials to the publisher in batches. Those batches will go from the publisher to the reviewers and back to the publisher. An editor will analyze and evaluate the reviews before returning the materials to you.

When you have completed the entire book in this fashion, you will prepare a revised manuscript, taking reviewers' comments into account and adding any new material you have discovered. This version of the manuscript will usually go out for review as well.

Once all the reviews are in and you have made all the changes you need to make, you will send a clean copy (or perhaps two copies) of the manuscript to the publisher. Two things will happen to your manuscript. One copy of it will go to the production staff in the publishing company. The production staff will need to consider matters of length, book design (including typography and layout), and other technical aspects of book production.

At this point, you are still about a year away from seeing your words in book form, and you still have a lot of hard work left to do.

THE COPY EDITOR: THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

A separate copy of the manuscript (usually the original) will go to a copy editor. At this point, the publisher is convinced that your book will sell enough copies to pay for itself and perhaps make a profit. The copy editor is the publisher's last best insurance that your manuscript will make sense to thousands of potential readers.

The copy editor is responsible for providing the directions for the printer, who needs to know what size type to use for headings, what material to set in italics, what material to set in boldface, what material to indent, and so forth. The copy editor is also responsible for ensuring that all of your sentences contain a subject and a verb and meet the other requirements of standard English usage.

Writers often develop an intense love/hate relationship with their copy editors. A good copy editor can bring out the best in your

work by tightening where you've been too wordy and by insisting on full explanation where you've been too brief. Even the best copy editor, however, will make arbitrary changes and totally misinterpret entire passages, rewriting madly with colored pencil. Fortunately, you can always erase.

Copy editors will also attach colored tabs of paper containing "author queries." Your publisher will not be happy until you have provided an adequate answer to each of these queries. Some of the queries you'll be able to answer with a phrase or a sentence or two. Some may require days of research and an additional five pages of copy.

Eventually, you'll finish with the process of making sure that your copy editor hasn't written more of your book than you have, and you'll send the complete manuscript back to the publisher.

GALLEYS AND PAGE PROOFS: THIS, TOO, SHALL PASS

Thus far you may have worked with an acquisition editor, a developmental editor, a project editor, and your copy editor. You'll now have the opportunity to work with the production editor. The production editor has the responsibility of turning your manuscript into a finished book.

The main thing you need to know about production editors is that they work on very tight schedules. Be prepared to develop a close relationship with your local Federal Express agent or to spend time waiting in the Express Mail line at the post office.

Your first words set in type will arrive as galley proofs. They will look wonderful. They will look perfect, in fact. Unfortunately, typesetters make mistakes. It's your job to catch those mistakes. Proofread carefully. Check to see that no sentences (or perhaps paragraphs or pages) have been printed twice or omitted. Check to see if all the headings are correct. See if i really is before e except after c.

Expect to make numerous corrections. Now is not the time, however, to change your mind about what you've said. The typesetter is responsible for deviations from the manuscript, but you are responsible for editorial changes at this point. "Author's alterations" can be expensive. If you absolutely must make changes, do so on a character-by-character basis. If you decide to insert a whole new paragraph, you may necessitate resetting pages of type. In one way or another, you will pay for that resetting.

You will receive galley proofs in batches of several chapters at a time. Your production editor will call you before each batch arrives to ask why it isn't back yet. While your book is in production, you should arrange your schedule so that you'll be able to devote instant and complete attention to each new batch of proofs as it arrives.

Once you have finished with galley proofs, page proofs will begin to arrive. Page proofs will look like galley proofs except that

pagination will have been inserted and the material will be cut to page size. Page proofs, too, will look perfect. They won't be. Proofread carefully. Make sure that you have inserted any required cross references (to other sections of your book). Check to see whether the typesetter bothered to make the changes you commented on in galley proofs. Look for new errors, too. This is your last chance to catch mistakes before your idea becomes a book. Author's alterations at this point are even more expensive. Avoid them.

Your production editor will also want page proofs back yesterday. In addition, if your book requires an index, the production editor will want that yesterday, too. Remember that you will need two copies of page proofs if you are responsible for the index--you will need to proofread and return one set and use the other to produce the index.

Once you have returned the last of the page proofs, completed the index, and perhaps written an instructor's manual, you can relax. Your part is over.

THE PRODUCT: FROM PRIVATE GENIUS TO PUBLIC FOOL

The period between page proofs and the finished product is a nice period--a little like the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas for a typical ten-year old. The sense of achievement is high. Self-congratulation is the order of the day.

But pride continues to goeth before a fall. For some reason, the mistakes you were unable to find in galleys and page proofs are the first thing you'll see when the big day arrives and you receive your first copy of THE BOOK. Others will find the mistakes quickly, too. The misspelling on page 27, the faulty label on the table on page 63, and the missing heading on page 146 will all help you learn the valuable lesson of humility.

Celebrate a little anyway. You will have accomplished something that not everyone could have done. And note the mistakes as you find them. The publisher will want a list of corrections before the second printing. And, if your book is successful, you'll need to begin work on a revision in two or three years anyway.

THE PAY OFF: ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

Most books do not make their authors rich. Some do, of course, and it's always fun to hope. A book that sells well can make a significant difference in one's income, but a typical, average-selling book will not produce large amounts of income. No one should write a book simply because he or she expects to make a lot of money.

Writing even an unsuccessful book, however, can be a rewarding experience. You can't write a book without learning a great deal about its subject matter. When you begin work on a book, you will quickly discover which subjects you know well enough to explain easily and which you don't yet understand well enough to verbalize. The research and writing required can greatly improve your command of the

subject. If you weren't an authority in the area already, the work of writing a book can make you one.

In addition, book authorship provides a certain amount of prestige. People remember articles not by author but by the publication. They remember books by the authors. Your colleagues may not like your book, but they will remember that you wrote it.

For those of us who are in academic professions, writing a book may also contribute to earning merit pay, promotion, or tenure. Then again, it may not. At some schools, only those articles appearing in refereed journals are used to measure a writer's worth. Your colleagues may discount your book because you will earn royalties on it.

To earn their respect, you may have to write journal articles, too. But we know what you'll show your friends when they come to dinner and what you'll write home to mom and dad about. After all, not everyone can write a book.

CLASSROOM TO INDUSTRY:
IN SEARCH OF REALITY

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ABSTRACT

The three-hour undergraduate course in business and technical writing may serve undergraduates in business, agriculture, engineering, and home economics as their sole preparation for professional written and spoken communication. An effective course will reflect actual communication needs in business and industry and should be based on an appropriate synthesis of current research in rhetorical and pedagogical theories. This paper summarizes writing needs in the world of work and presents the synthesis of theory used to modify an introductory technical communications course.

Business and technical communication courses try to bridge the gap between the classroom and the world of work. To design courses in professional communication which help bridge that gap, teachers must know what the workplace expects its employees to write. And communication teachers must also know how best to teach whatever business and industry need. This paper identifies business and industry needs and presents the synthesis of rhetorical and pedagogical theories used to modify the course content of an introductory technical communications course which serves students as their sole education in technical communications.

Bridging the gap between the academic world and the world of work is difficult and not entirely possible. But certain theoretical concepts currently considered important in technical and business communication courses match aspects of writing required by industry and business. Technical and business writing is audience-centered, reader-oriented, and transactional. Such writing is process-oriented, subject to reviews, both peer and hierarchical, and is situationally derived. Classroom assignments in professional writing courses reflect concern with writing as process and with the student's need to consider audience, to write reader-based prose, to consider the situation from which writing is derived and to consider the results expected from the writing produced. Thus, there is a match between the technical and business writing assignments and the requirements of the world of work, a match students may not have found in their composition classes where, often, they wrote contemplative essays to the teacher for a grade.

The first task of the teacher, and one which bridges both the gap between the composition class and the professional writing class as well as the academic world and the real world, is to teach students about the intentionality of professional writing. "In composition theory, writers' behavior and what stimulates them are at least as valuable as generated texts. Indeed, in writing courses those behaviors are primary, since one concern is to reduce disparities between what writers set out to do and what their completed discourses actually achieve."[1] If we give assignments which match real-world writing, we move students into the world of practical, intentional writing whose success can be measured by the results elicited.[2] Writing can be measured by effect rather than by the match between what the student thinks the teacher wants and what the essay says. Such awareness of intentionality and of the need for a practical response helps the students become aware of the kinds of writing expected of them on the job. They will learn that writing is action-oriented; it seeks responses: permission to proceed with a project, a change in behavior, sales, a consulting job, a promotion, reorganization in business, or, simply, acknowledgement. These responses are a form of action, matching, if the writer is successful, the clearly presented purpose, the implied or stated intention; the transactional nature of professional writing becomes apparent as students move out of the composition mode of thinking.

Although teachers must help students move from the world of composition to the world of professional writing, teachers must also help students recognize the value of learning to write for the world of work. Students must also learn to identify situational, rhetorical and formal variables of various kinds of reports and letters. Research demonstrates that students will write on the job and that they will write certain kinds of reports and letters more frequently than other types.

A 1979 survey which sought to identify the strengths of its civil, electrical and mechanical engineering graduates noted that "the most significant finding of the survey is that respondents overwhelmingly stressed the ability to communicate as most important, yet rated recent graduates. . .very deficient in this attribute.[3] Richard Davis surveyed 348 engineers listed in Engineers of Distinction and found that they spent 24 percent of their time writing.[4] A survey of college graduates in Texas and Louisiana reported that college graduates spend "23.1% of total work time. . .writing."[5] Students must write, perhaps a quarter of their working time. What will they write?

A survey of business writing practices reported that "graduates write memoranda and letters significantly more often than they write all other forms, and they write short reports significantly more often than any other form except memoranda and letters." The same report notes that graduates need to learn to prepare oral communication.[6] Another survey of business graduates noted that the most frequently written forms are memoranda, letters, short reports and instructions. Proposals and progress reports were quite important. Least important were long articles; yet the same survey reports that professors of business communications rated the long article, particularly as if prepared for journal publication, much higher than did the businesses surveyed.[7] A survey of engineering needs in communication stated that the most frequently written type of report included

"project proposals, instructions, progress reports." Ranked last were professional reports and "long reports (ten or more typewritten, double-spaced pages)."[8]

All sources cited stressed the need for oral communications. In contrast, a study of basic business communication courses noted that "in terms of subject matter emphasis, little emphasis [is] . . . devoted to oral communication in the basic course."[9] Another noted that the oral report which is tied to the written report is important in industry and that this type of report "call[s] for special communication skills and techniques--ones totally different from those of large-group oratory."[10] This emphasis on special oral communication needs is significant since one critic of teaching methods and training in technical communications asserted that "most colleges have separate courses and even separate departments in speech, and speech instructors are better prepared than writing teachers to help students achieve oral competency."[11] No doubt this critic is correct in some ways; yet students preparing for business and industry need experience in deriving oral reports from reports written in particular contexts for specific audiences. We know, then, that we need to teach memoranda, short reports, progress reports, proposals, instructions, and oral communications. What kinds of rhetorical concepts and skills should we stress?

The studies all agree that "clarity" was essential. One noted that "business executives seem to agree on two important points: clarity, conciseness, organization, grammar and spelling are the most important basics: letters, memos, and reports are the most important business forms."[12] Another study noted that "clarity was mentioned more than any other quality, followed by grammar, mechanics and usage. . . . Respondents often defined clarity as clear thinking rather than simple writing."[13] A third survey noted that "the graduates gave the second greatest to clearly stating one's purpose to the readers, followed by knowing how to organize a communication and writing concisely."[14]

We know <u>what</u> types of reports we should teach. We know the rhetorical concepts and skills students need. Assignments should stress audience identification, purpose statement and clarity. Poor grammar (if that is a problem; rarely is it) and mechanical weaknesses should be corrected. The primary factor of clarity probably overrides all other considerations since, if a document is "clear," it is both readable at the discourse level and comprehendable by its audience. The document must have a clearly stated purpose and a clearly developed context and intention. We can choose those assignments which teach students types of reports and concepts for report and letter writing. But how do we teach? Does it matter?

It does matter. Current research in composition and pedagogical theory stresses the need to teach process, not product. We are to help students learn not just what to write, but how to write or how to compose that product by which their success on the job will be measured.

Current research in cognitive psychology notes that "We should be teaching students how to think; instead we are primarily teaching them what to think."[15] As early as 1978, Richard Young pointed out that the current-traditional pedagogy emphasizes "the composed product rather than

the composing process."[16] By 1984, we should be aware of the need to teach something about process. And we should be aware of protocol analyses, their concern with the variety of stages of composing. Flower and Hayes have analyzed writing processes and describe plans writers use while writing as "procedural plans," "reader-based plans," and "product-based plans."[17] All three are important, and we must help students learn when they may most profitably use each plan, when they are unconsciously switching plans, and when they may consciously change plans.

Teachers may no longer simply assign a paper and assume that students can simply imitate the model. We cannot teach product, for the student cannot imitate a document which is so complex as to contain constraints of situation, audience, intention and rhetorical constraints appropriate to its specific organization. We can teach report types, and we can offer reports as models, but we must change pedagogical methods to help students understand the role of reports as models as well as to help them learn to identify, understand and manipulate the variables of writing situation and context. In learning to manipulate such variables, students must necessarily plan, and will experience writing as a process, probably a recursive process rather than a sequential, three-stage system of production.

Perhaps everyone knows that the "current-traditional" paradigm of rhetorical and pedagogical theory is no longer to be blindly accepted. We are not to teach product. We are not to teach prescriptively, and we must teach design of documents, teaching, thereby, invention and process. Perhaps this is old news. However, Maxine Hairston points out in "The Winds of Change" that "the overwhelming majority of college writing teachers in the United States. . . do not do research or publish on rhetoric or composition, and they do not know the scholarship in the field;. . .they are trained as literary critics first and as teachers of literature second, yet out of necessity most of them are doing half or more of their teaching in composition."[18] I am not sure how many of those professors teaching business and technical communications would be included in Hairston's classification of "teachers of composition." Perhaps we are exempt. But Hairston's rather depressing view of the knowledge gap is corroborated by Burhans who surveyed writing courses in four year colleges and universities. He based his conclusions about the content of the courses on the description of courses as published in college bulletins. These descriptions included specialized courses in business and technical communications. Fewer than 4 percent mention "writing processes," and fewer than 4 percent mentioned "audience."[19]

Current research tells us that teaching process, teaching strategies for problem-solving, and teaching audience analysis are essential. We see that bibliographies and articles on process and current rhetorical theory multiply as we read. Two recent articles, one by Lunsford and Ede[20] and another by Warnock,[21] not only thoroughly analyze the concepts of recent rhetorical research, but offer long, and fine, bibliographies. So we must know about current research in pedagogical theory. Hairston synthesizes the research in the following list:

> Its principal features are these:
>
> 1. It focuses on the writing process; instructors intervene in students' writing during the process.

2. It teaches strategies for invention and discovery; instructors help students to generate content and discover purpose.

3. It is rhetorically based; audience, purpose and occasion figure prominently in the assignment of writing tasks.

4. Instructors evaluate the written product by how well it fulfills the writer's intention and meets the audience's needs.

5. It views writing as a recursive rather than a linear process; prewriting, writing, and revision are activities that overlap and intertwine.

7. It emphasizes that writing is a way of learning and developing as well as a communication skill.

9. It is informed by other disciplines, especially cognitive psychology and linguistics.

10. It views writing as a disciplined creative activity that can be analyzed and described; its practitioners believe that writing can be taught.

12. It stresses the principle that writing teachers should be people who write.[22]

This list could guide us in course design and choice of assignments. If we include workshops in our course plan, we can stress process and invention, and intervene at the rough draft stage before students hand in the product, which, of course, must be handed in for a grade. We do, already, assign audience-directed reports. Reports and letters are intentional; they have audiences, and purpose. If we can design an appropriate context or situation, we make writing for audience and discovering intention and purpose easier for our students. And we can work on developing reader-oriented documents by allowing students to read rough drafts and final drafts in terms of the author's intentions. Students are readers and can evaluate the effectiveness of a document (report or letter or memorandum) in terms of its usability for them in their role as audience.

At Nebraska, some of the technical writing teaching staff have changed both assignments and teaching methods. I still teach the product. I give assignments in terms of product, for my students do not have time to design documents, even though I agree with Redish and Racette of the Document Design Center that a course which teaches document design is desirable.[23] My students are entirely too inexperienced to design a report. I must use the report to teach students about the writing situation out of which the report comes, about audience, intention and purpose of the report as well as about the role of arrangement and of headings as signalling devices. (The case study, which simulates a writing context and situation, will not work in my classes, because my students are from a variety of majors and may be freshmen to seniors. Consequently, I find the report as model a

useful source of identification of constraints of audience, situation, context, purpose, intention, as well as of rhetorical constraints.) But, after we discuss these important concepts of report development and letter writing, we use the workshops as opportunities to work on process.

Our writing assignments reflect the needs of industry. Some of our teaching staff no longer require the long library research report. Instead of that report (really not a part of any business or technical writing report as far as I can see), we may have a feasibility report or a problem-solving proposal, neither of which depends solely on library research. Since our classes are heterogenous, the feasibility report or proposal permits the engineering, agriculture, and general science major to choose topics appropriate to their majors and their level of education in that major. If students write a feasibility report, it is arranged according to Houp and Pearsall's executive arrangement.[24] This arrangement requires that the factual summary, conclusions, and recommendations come before the body, reflecting industry's need for an organization which permits selective, efficient, and fast reading. Such an arrangement enables the student to learn to synthesize and to arrange material for primary and secondary audiences.

Whenever possible, reports are group projects, reflecting the reality of industry's need to have students learn how to write with others, as well as how to go through a document review process (although ours is not at a hierarchical level, since the group report necessarily receives peer review). Group projects also reinforce the process concept of writing, for such writing takes more than one stage of writing and rewriting before the group is content with it. And the group project reflects a reality of the world of work: sometimes not everyone does the same amount of work, but everyone gets credit.

We also teach the shorter report: the progress report, the proposal for research, instructions for performing a process and descriptions of mechanisms. The latter two types of reports can be written as if they were to appear in the context of a user's manual. And since the proposals, feasibility report and progress reports may be submitted either in memorandum form or report form accompanied by letters of transmittal, students have experience in writing both memoranda and letters. The research the students conduct may require letters of inquiry as well. Some students even conduct interviews and surveys, although we do not have as much time for those projects as would be desirable. Types of letters, memoranda, and short reports may vary depending on student need and topics. Some students may conduct interviews; others may write letters of inquiry. Some students may submit a proposal in letter form; others may choose to use a formal report format, depending on the situation and audience they identify.

Time is a constraint, and as stated, it is necessary to teach the report, the product. However, in selecting the kinds of reports, we try to meet the demands of industry as well as meeting the demands of pedagogy. Using the report as the occasion for discussing the communication situation and its various components is efficient. The report functions well as heuristic too. Victoria Winkler argues quite cogently in "The Role of Models in Technical and Scientific Writing" that the report functions both as structural and inventional model:

> Inventional models are creative analogies that guide and direct the reader's cognitive processes in generating the substance of discourse. They serve as cognitive maps to an unknown territory--guiding the writer's perceptual processes, problem-solving processes, learning processes, and verbal skills to explore the subject. Structural models assist the writer in giving form to that substance.[25]

Using the report as model is appropriate if it is used with understanding of its value and its limitations. Some of us at the University of Nebraska have changed not only the kinds of reports, but the pedagogical theory which substantiates the content we include in our classes in technical communications. Such changes in pedagogical theory, modifications of rhetorical emphases and types of assignments result in a tactical problem. Grades are a serious problem when one stresses the value of process while trying to teach as many report types and situations as possible.

Grades reinforce for students the need to present a polished product. But to stress the value of the composing process, the teacher may have to introduce new teaching methods. Obviously the workshop during class time is valuable, for it ensures that the student will have at least one opportunity to prepare a draft to be read for intentions and reader-orientation.

Requiring that students submit a rough draft for peer review may ensure that students write at least two drafts, although I am not so naive as to believe anything ensures rewriting. At least, the workshop reinforces belief in current writing and pedagogical theory that rewriting is necessary and recursive. I surely encourage students to submit messy drafts, to rewrite drafts, and to submit rough drafts with the final paper. Nina Ziv, who studied four students' writing processes, noted that one student "said in his final interview that at first he had been used to writing a paper once and handing it in to the teacher for a grade. Since other students may have similar attitudes, teachers might discuss the value of revision and show students samples of their own writing and revising processes."[26] Class time will determine whether teachers may demonstrate their own writing process, but devoting class time to the process of writing and to reviewing and discussing the student writing at the rough draft stage reinforces for the students that writing is a process which must be reader-based.

However, time is limited. We have to consider whether we believe that process should and can be taught. One teacher determined that "revisions and cooperative work on papers increase student and class time by at least 25% for each paper. . . ."[27] We simply cannot assign as many papers as we did before we tried to stress the value of planning and writing. No matter how important process is, we must still grade the product, for it is by the product that the student/employee is judged. Grades evaluate writing produced in academia though action of some sort may evaluate the effectiveness of writing produced in the world of work. Students must be certified: we must grade.

Peter Elbow gives advice on evaluation of papers. Since he is not known for his product orientation, his discussion of criteria is valuable. He had to reconcile his interest in process with his need to establish standards:

> I concluded that good writing requires on the one hand the ability to conceive copiously of many possibilities, an ability which is enhanced by a spirit of open, accepting generativity; but on the other hand good writing also requires an ability to criticize and reject everything but the best, a very different ability which is enhanced by a tough-minded critical spirit.
>
> . . . .
>
> When I assign papers, I. . .start by advertising my gatekeeper role, by clearly communicating standards and criteria. . . .
>
> I suspect there is something particularly valuable here about embodying our commitment to knowledge and society in the form of documents or handouts: words on palpable sheets of paper rather than just spoken words-in-the-air. Documents heighten the sense that I do indeed take responsibility for these standards; writing them forces me to try to make them as concrete, explicit and objective as possible (if not necessarily fair).[28]

Elbow combines the best of both worlds in pedagogy. He endorses process, but grades product. And I believe that we have to do that if we are to bridge the gap between the academic world and the so-called real world. In the real world, the part-time technical writer or the business communicator will have to "invent" the document, but that writer will be judged by the product. We must also judge the product, and we can clarify for the students what our criteria are. It may also reflect the real world that the standards are concrete and specific, but not necessarily fair.

I have discussed the need for the teacher to know what industry wants and to know and to choose wisely from results of research in writing needs, rhetoric theory and pedagogy in order to teach students who have a limited amount of time to learn. Time is a constraint; occasionally textbooks are too. Robert Gieselman, in an analysis of frequently used business-writing texts, notes that "the paucity of coverage of audience analysis can only be regarded as mystifying, especially when we consider how truly reader-oriented these books are as compared to many books on writing, a large number of which exhibit a rigid product orientation."[29] Technical writing textbooks do concentrate on audience analysis, although some may still reflect the product-orientation, but skillful use of the report as both product and process alleviates the product emphasis. Audience is the prime determinant of purpose, intention, content and tone. Students need much help with the concept of writing for an audience; where possible, case studies could be helpful. My students have neither the time nor the background necessary for effective use of case studies; even case studies do not approximate the realities of business and industry.

Many of us who teach business and technical communications are aware that the needs of business and industry require that we teach writing as process, identify writing as situational, work with aspects of audience, purpose, intention and transaction as well as with the more traditional

rhetorical constraints. Current research in pedagogy and rhetorical theory also stresses the need to work with process, context, audience, and intentional writing measured by the effectiveness with which purpose is achieved. That writing is transactional and audience-centered makes it appropriate to introduce the politics of communication.

When I talk to students about the politics of communication, I am not talking to untutored audiences, for students have developed extraordinary skills at figuring out one audience: the teacher. They know that teachers often fail to say what they want. And until I develop the "paradigm" I am working on to turn the students' skill in analyzing the teacher into a tool for writing, I talk to them about the politics of communication. We discuss the significance of silence on the other end of the phone, the value of white space on the page, and the meaning of erasures on tapes. We also talk about need for clarity and about the occasional need for lack of clarity. When I talk to them about the politics of communication, I talk about what they know: psyching out the teacher as psyching out the audience. And then I read them this passage from the Wall Street Journal:

> . . .jungles of verbiage, buried conclusions, passive voice and other hallmarks of crummy corporate writing also stem from fear. The writer is unconsciously avoiding clear, forceful, personal statements that a peer or boss may take exception to. This is cover-your-ass writing. . . . Little men using big words.
>
> . . . .Consultants don't often treat corporate PR people because the latter are hired in large part for their language skills. But frightened flacks of the nuclear power industry recently won the 1979 double-speak award of the National Council of Teachers of English for a collective retreat into euphemism during the near-disaster at Three Mile Island. In their lexicon, an explosion became an "energetic disassembly" and a fire was transformed into "rapid oxidation." Plutonium didn't contaminate things; it became a friendly little substance that "took up residence." A writer told Mr. Mueller: "We wanted to keep our jobs."[30]

We can do our best to teach students the right kind of reports, the right methods of composing; we can write ourselves, and use what is sound from recent research. We can also be as honest with our students as the realities of the classroom and the workplace permit.

FOOTNOTES

1. C. H. Knoblauch, "Intentionality in the Writing Process: A Case Study," College English XXXI (No. 2, May 1980), p. 155.

2. Maria Lemon, Owner-Manager of The Editor: A Public Relations and Writing Consultancy, Lincoln, Nebraska. Interview, January, 1984.

3. William R. Kimel and Melford E. Monsees, "Engineering Graduates: How Good Are They?," Engineering Education 70 (No. 2, November 1979), p. 212.

4. Richard M. Davis, "Technical Writing in Industry and Government," Journal of Technical Writing and Communication 7 (No. 3, 1977), p. 237.

5. Lester Faigley and Thomas P. Miller, "What We Learn from Writing on the Job," College English 44 (No. 6, October 1982), p. 560.

6. G. Gilbert Storms, "What Business School Graduates Say About the Writing They Do At Work: Implications for the Business Communication Course," The ABCA Bulletin XLVI (No. 4, December 1983), pp. 15-16.

7. Donna Stine and Donald Skarzenski, "Priorities for the Business Communication Classroom: A Survey of Business and Academe," The Journal of Business Communication 16 (No. 3, Spring 1979), pp. 20-21.

8. Peter Shiff, "Speech: Another Facet of Technical Communications," IEEE Transactions of Professional Communication PC-24 (No. 2, June 1981), p. 90.

9. Scott Ober and Alan P. Wunsch, "The Status of Business Communication Instruction in Postsecondary Institutions in the United States," The Journal of Business Communication 20 (No. 2, Spring 1983), p. 16.

10. R. John Brockmann, "Taking a Look at Technical Communications Pedagogy," Journal of Technical Writing and Communication 10 (No. 4, 1980), p. 289.

11. Robert S. Kellner, "The Degeneration of Technical Writing: A Question of Teacher Competency," The ABCA Bulletin XVL (No. 3, September 1982), p. 9.

12. Stine, D. and Skarzenski, "Priorities for the Business Communication Classroom," p. 27.

13. Faigley and Miller, "What We Learn from Writing on the Job," pp. 561-562.

14. Storms, "What Business Schools Graduates Say About the Writing They Do at Work," p. 16.

15. Jack Lochhead, "Preface," in Cognitive Process Instruction: Research on Teaching Thinking Skills, edited by Jack Lochhead and John Clement, pp. 1-4 (Philadelphia: The Franklin Institute Press, 1979), p. 1.

16. Richard E. Young, "Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Composition," in Research in Composing: Points of Departure, eds. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana, Ill: NCTE, 1978), p. 31.

17. Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, "Plans that Guide the Writing Process," in Writing: Process, Development and Communication, Volume 2 of Writing: The Nature, Development and Teaching of Written Communication, eds. Carl H. Frederiksen and Joseph F. Dominic, pp. 39-58 (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Pub., 1981), pp. 52, 56.

18. Maxine Hairston, "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing," College Composition and Communication XXXIII (No. 1, February 1982), pp. 78-79.

19. Clinton S. Burhans, "The Teaching of Writing and the Knowledge Gap," College English 45 (No. 7, November 1983), p. 646.

20. Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa S. Ede, "Classical Rhetoric, Modern Rhetoric, and Contemporary Discourse Studies," Written Communication 1 (No. 1, January 1984), pp. 78-100.

21. John Warnock, "The Writing Process," Rhetoric Review 2 (No. 1, September 1983), pp. 4-27.

22. Hairston, "The Winds of Change," p. 86.

23. Janice C. Redish and Kathryn Racette, Teaching College Students How to Write: Training Opportunities for Document Designers, (Washington, DC: Document Design Project, No. 4, November 1979: ED 192333), p. 2.

24. Kenneth W. Houp and Thomas E. Pearsall, Reporting Technical Information 4th edition. (Encino, California: Collier Macmillan Publisher, 1980), pp. 412-413.

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26. Nina D. Ziv, "The Effect of Teacher Comments on the Writing of Four College Freshmen," in New Directions in Composition Research, eds. Richard Beach and Lillian S. Bridwell, pp. 362-380 (New York: The Guilford Press, 1984), p. 377.

27. Brockmann, "Taking a Look at Technical Communications Pedagogy," p. 289.

28. Peter Elbow, "Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process," College English 45 (No. 4, April 1983), p. 327, p. 336.

29. Robert D. Gieselman, "Reading, Writing and Research: Pedagogical Implications," The Journal of Business Communication 19 (No. 4, Fall 1982), p. 35.

30. William E. Blundell, "Confused, Overstuffed, Corporate Writing Often Costs Firms Much Time--and Money," The Wall Street Journal, August 28, 1980, no page: printed by permission once and once only.

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MAKING PROPOSAL WRITING REAL IN THE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a procedure used to teach proposal writing in a beginning technical writing class, explaining its successes and failures. The students with humanities and business majors worked together to write proposals for mini-grants from the Wisconsin Humanities Committee to fund projects in three program areas: Public Policy and Social Concerns, Local and Regional Heritage, and the Humanities at Large. The paper also describes the three proposals that were funded and the writing problems that surfaced.

* * *

English 305--Technical Writing at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is much like the beginning technical writing course at many colleges and universities. Juniors and seniors from the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business enroll. They are typical of most students in a writing class who seem to find a way during the first week to say privately such things as "I'm not really good in writing." "I took this course because I know it will help me in my major field." "This course will look good on my resume." Each semester, I feel naturally apprehensive about selecting course content for a class of twenty-six smart students from such varied backgrounds as Allied Health, English, Geography, Business Administration, Psychology, Management Information Systems, Math, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Science, etc.

Generally, I feel very good about the content of the course. One of the basic rules is that students must write papers about their major for an uninformed audience--obviously the rest of the class and me. This rule has worked very well as students have practiced defining and describing skills, writing informal and formal technical reports and business communications; however, during last semester, I particularly dreaded proposal writing. I just couldn't face any more superficial solutions to university and community problems. I felt like a member of a university student council who knows he has no power and is playing a game. My assignments seemed unreal. I finally decided I would have the students write a proposal for a mini-grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Committee for three reasons: (1) because they would have to work with all the problems involved in good proposal writing, (2) because I had recently written one, struggling myself with the frustrations in such

writing, and (3) because the assignment demanded a creative and different approach from anything they had written before.

The Wisconsin Humanities Committee receives money from the National Endowment of the Humanities to support projects promoting understanding and appreciation of the humanities among out-of-school adults. The proposals for the mini-grants are reviewed monthly and are funded for $1000 or less in three program areas: Public Policy and Social Concerns, Local and Regional Heritage, and the Humanities at Large. Any non-profit organization or institution in Wisconsin is eligible to submit a proposal for funding, but no individual may apply. The projects must:

(1) Be designed to accomplish a broader understanding and appreciation of the methods and content of the humanities and their use in contemporary life and thought.

(2) Involve graduate humanities scholars in the planning and implementation.

(3) Provide a fifty percent auditable match in funds. (May be in-kind through contributed services, time, talent, and facilities.)

(4) Design programs for the active participation of the out-of-school audience.

(5) Strive for balance, avoiding social action or advocacy of any single point of view.

The mini-grant proposal presented all the ingredients for creative proposal writing. In addition, I had a class with a fantastic mixture of students, a university community of humanities scholars, three local members of the Wisconsin Committee of the Humanities in Eau Claire who would provide feedback in class, and a public library that would provide facilities for the projects. I also had, and have always had, a strong desire to "urge" students of the humanities and the students of business to work together to try to understand each other's philosophy better. Now, not only could I do this, perhaps also I could lead the students into developing some good community projects.

I was ready for the classroom work. First, I added the other most important basic project requirement: each proposal must blend the world of the humanities with the world of business in some way. To show the business students how important the humanities are to the lives of their community and to show the humanities students how important it is to understand the positive aspects of business motives and practices within a community were prime objectives. I hoped this added requirement would bring about some unconventional, creative planning, but I also hoped for more than that. I hoped students from both fields would retain a respect for each other and work for the community good when they became leaders in businesses and communities.

In the second step, after the students had partially recovered from the initial shock of the assignment, many having been completely unaware of the Wisconsin Humanities Committee or its meaning, I divided the class into groups containing both humanists and business students to accomplish three tasks: brainstorm possible proposal topics, evaluate them, and then delve into the university catalog to find humanists and business professors who might help them out. All proposals had to have letters of support from both a professor of the humanities and a professor of business. This presented a wonderful side benefit--students and professors brainstorming over possible creative projects that might be funded if someone wanted to follow through with the plan. Everybody would win--the students, the professors, and the community.

In the third step, each student, armed with tentative ideas about his or her project but uncertain about talking with some unknown professors had to make appointments to discuss the merits of such a project and to ask for letters of support. This sharing of ideas and requests for letters of support brought a mixed reaction from the professors, as I might have guessed. Professors are busy people; most, however, were very cooperative. Some of the proposals generated for the mini-grants from WHC are listed below. The quality varied, of course, and some students just gave up on blending business and the humanities in the project. Of the twenty-two proposals written (I have included nineteen here), only three were actually submitted for funding, and all three were funded. We did not plan to submit any; however, we were requested by outside agencies to write two, and then an outside agency requested one already written. Discussions about these will follow.

Funding Possible

- Their Past Has Made Our Present: A History of Mondovi, Wisconsin, 1856-1910

- Foreign Language Newspapers and the Development of Wisconsin

- Presentation of the Works of Barbara Pym

- Business Ethics, the Community, and You

- Toxic Waste and Public Awareness

- Ethics of Nuclear Waste Disposal is Wisconsin

-Interpretation of World War II for Local Historians

- The Ethics of the Marriage Tax Law

- Should Corporations Have the Right to Make Campaign Contributions?

- Conflict of the Public's Right to Information vs. The Right to Privacy

- Reducing Medical Costs Through Social Change

- The Effects of Computer Crime on the Public

- The Evolution of Culture: Does Man Control His Civilization?

Funding Improbable

The obvious reasons I believe these might not be funded are that (1) projects may be written only about history or criticism of art and music, (2) some have been overdone already, (3) some do not stress the role of the humanities enough.

- The Growing Use of Computer Graphics in Art

- Computers and How They Promote Creativity

- Music and Computers: How Do They Work Together?

- The Men Behind Calculus--A Historical Look

- Workshop in Contemporary Literature for Young Adults

- The Effects of Television Viewing on Children

In the final step, after writing the proposals, each student presented his or her proposal orally to the class and to one member of the Wisconsin Humanities Committee present who gave immediate feedback on the proposal's merit. The presentations were also videotaped so that a student could write a review and critique of the performance.

The three projects funded were (1) Their Past Has Made Our Present: A History of Mondovi, Wisconsin, 1856-1910, (2) Presentation of the Works of Barbara Pym and (3) Foreign Language Newspapers and the Development of Wisconsin.

The project in Mondovi is an exciting one. Mondovi is a small town of about 3000. Some UWEC faculty members have encouraged the Medical Auxiliary to work with an eleventh-grade, employment-bound class and its outstanding teacher, Virginia Everson, to develop a folk fair for the community. The students are collecting oral history from older residents and searching for historical materials from the local historical society's files and from the University Archives. They are also working with the local community theater group to write a Reader's Theater presentation for the fair and with the older citizens who will demonstrate their crafts. Much of the small community is involved! The mini-grant is providing funding for tapes and for the printing of a student booklet for community use. I can hardly wait to go to this fair on May 11.

The Chippewa Valley Museum requested a copy of the grant proposal for Foreign Language Newspapers and the Development of Wisconsin after it was written and submitted it for funding. The Museum learned about the project from a member of the Wisconsin Humanities Committee who listened to the presentations in class. A program will soon be held at the Museum.

The UWEC English Department requested the mini-grant for the presentation of Barbara Pym's work be written. Barbara Pym, as many may know, is a rediscovered British novelist whose novels often deal with anthropology.

As always, we had some problems too: I simply underestimated the amount of time students would need to complete the assignment. Some had great difficulty finding ways to blend business and the humanities in a common project. Some simply did not follow the instructions in proposal writing carefully. Too many sought help from the same professors in philosophy.

These shortcomings can be worked out with time. We worked to write good proposals: identifying needs, creating solutions within restricted guidelines, analyzing the audience, planning program, planning publicity, budgeting, and seeking active support and approval from a real committee. It was a good experience. I am trying to improve the procedure this semester by allowing an additional week of time (three weeks total), limiting the number of times any given professor might be contacted, and trying to involve some community people in the planning of a project.

CONSULTING: AIDING THE CORPORATE COMMUNITY WHILE IMPROVING TEACHING METHODS

Steven M. Gerson, Johnson County Community College

ABSTRACT

Serving as a business writing consultant for Johnson County Community College's Business Industry Institute allows me to bridge the gap between academia and the corporate community. By presenting seminars on site and on campus, I provide local businesses with information regarding effective correspondence. My consulting, however, also enhances my teaching. After working in the corporate community, I return to the classroom knowing what actually constitutes effective correspondence in the real world of business. This knowledge benefits my students.

Johnson County Community College has successfully bridged the gap between the college and our corporate community. In 1982, the college created a Business Industry Institute, whose charge was to provide the community with cost-effective, time-efficient business consulting services. Specifically, the Business Industry Institute, a division operating within the college, promotes the college's faculty as a community resource and markets us as consultants in such diverse areas as time and stress management, microcomputer training, creative problem solving, and human relations.

I am the Business Industry Institute's technical/business writing consultant. In this capacity, aside from performing my primary teaching duties within JCCC's English department, I provide eight, ten and twelve hour seminars, either on campus or on site. Companies with whom I've worked include United Telephone Midwest Group, Uninet, North Supply, JC Penney, Johnson County Mental Retardation Center, and Burlington Northern. My seminars have proven to be a successful bridge between the college and the community. The seminars not only provide the community's businesses with information regarding improved writing techniques, but also enhance my skills as a teacher. What I know about writing, I provide the business community; what I learn about business writing from the corporate community, I bring back to my students. As such, my seminars are a conduit allowing me to participate in a constant exchange of knowledge, information flowing back and forth between the two worlds of academia and business.

In fact, I've found that my seminars, bridging the gap between the ivory tower and the corporate tower, benefit the corporate community, my college, and my students.

Assisting the Corporate Community

As a community college instructor, my goal is to help the community. Consulting is a perfect bridge between academia and the community's corporations. By consulting, I bridge the gap in three ways.

1. Location/Time

My seminars are presented either on site or on campus. For those seminars presented on site, I literally take the college to the corporation, at times convenient to the seminar participants. I've presented seminars at night, in the afternoon, and on Saturdays. When North Supply wanted a ten hour seminar on two consecutive Saturdays, I drove to North Supply (in Gardner, KS) and consulted from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm on two consecutive

Saturdays. When JC Penney wanted a ten hour seminar in four afternoons, I drove to JC Penney (in Lenexa, KS) and consulted from 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm, Tuesday-Thursday, for two weeks. When United Telephone wanted a twelve hour seminar (meeting once a week, at night, after work), I drove to United Telephone (in Overland Park, KS) and consulted on five consecutive Wednesdays. The first four seminars lasted two and a half hours (4:30 pm to 7:00 pm); the last meeting lasted two hours (4:30 pm to 6:30 pm).

This flexible scheduling of on-site seminars benefits the corporations because they are delivered education in a familiar and convenient environment. Their employees can leave their desks, walk twenty-five feet down the corporate corridors, take a left turn into a conference room, and receive ten/twelve hours of college-level consultation. (If the corporate mountain won't go to the academic oracle, then . . . .)

Seminars presented on campus also benefit the seminar participants because they get a break from their work. Leaving the corporation to go to college is a perk. The on-campus seminars have additional benefits, however. In some cases, workers need to get away from their companies to profit from my consulting. If these workers stay on site, they occasionally receive phone calls during sessions or have to leave early to do catch-up work. An on-campus seminar relieves them of the burden of such interruptions. In other cases, employees who work for stiff, regulation-bound companies profit by going to a neutral site, like my college, where they can let their hair down a bit. Finally, an on-campus seminar can act as a magnet for employees who work outside their companies. Rather than return to their companies from wherever they might be, the seminar participants can meet at my school, which is centrally located. This saves everyone time and energy.

Thus, by choosing times and the locations, either on site or on campus, corporate personnel managers can meet the needs of their fellow employees. And by providing the companies these choices, I further bridge the gap between academia and business.

2. Personalized Instruction

I try to personalize each of my seminars, meeting the unique needs of the specific corporation. To accomplish this, I visit the corporation decision makers to determine what focus they want me to take. Should I focus on format, style, grammar? Usually, the decision maker has a perceived need. By discovering this need, I can focus on it, thereby pleasing the decision maker (which helps insure future seminars) and providing a needed service.

Another way I personalize the seminar is by requesting sample corporate correspondence to include in my seminar handout. This is effective for two reasons. First, the correspondence is relevant to the seminar participants because it involves their daily activities and work concerns. What I have to say about this correspondence has value to the participants. Second, because the correspondence is internal, written by their bosses and peers, the participants are more attentive in class. They have fun reading correspondence written by their friends. Textbook samples don't work as well since they have no real value or interest for the seminar participants. Very few employees at United Telephone could care less about a letter of inquiry concerning breeding dogs in Arizona or a proposal concerning the Apple Dapple Child Care Center in Wisconsin, topics in my textbook.

Finally, to personalize the seminars further, I ask the participants to bring transparencies of their own correspondence to our meetings. This is by far my most successful tool. I show these transparencies of their memos and letters and critique them word by word. By doing so, I can congratulate the writer on his/her successes and work on that person's unique flaws. Such attention is well worth the effort because it involves the participant and provides pertinent, individualized instruction, which the employee appreciates.

3. Cost

The last value to the corporations is price. Because JCCC is a tax-supported college, we charge much less for our services than other professional, independent consultants charge.

All in all, acting as a consultant for JCCC allows me to provide the community's corporations with convenient, quality, cost-effective instruction.

Promoting the College

As a consultant, I also benefit the college, not only in terms of PR, but also by helping fulfill the goals of a community college.

1. Public Relations

Rarely does anyone perceive a community college as an ivory tower, but there is always a certain gap between academia and the real world. As a consultant, I help bridge that gap. By going out into the community to present my seminars, I represent JCCC, thus providing substantial PR. The businesses see a real life college instructor at work, rather than merely reading about "the college on the hill" or receiving an impersonal college flier in their mailboxes, addressed to occupant. This personalizes the college and gives the corporate community a vivid, positive picture of how its tax dollars are being used. I provide further PR while consulting by mentioning my college's Grammar Hotline and Writing Center, "selling" them as community resources.

My on-campus seminars are equally beneficial in bridging the gap between the college and the community. Every semester, I work one on-campus seminar open to the general public, rather than geared to one specific company. In these seminars, I have discussed business writing with representatives from Southwestern Bell Telephone, Wells Fargo, General Mills, Quik Trip, New England Life Insurance, ERA Realty Company, Yellow Freight, and R & D Chemicals, among others. For many of these seminar participants, my seminar allows them to visit the campus for the first time. Often they'll say, "this is my first visit to JCCC. It's really a nice looking school." Several of them, I've learned, enroll for credit courses after my seminar because of the positive impressions formed from visiting the campus and attending my sessions.

2. The College's Charge

Another benefit of my consulting is that by going out into the corporate community or by bringing the businesses to my school, I help to fulfill the charge of the college--to work with and within the community.

Improving Teaching Methods

My students, perhaps, derive the greatest benefit from my consulting. Often college is abstract, general, cloistered, unreal. By consulting, I have been allowed to leave my academic seclusion and to venture out into the real world of business. When I return to college, I bring back my findings, and I'm better able to plug my students into the reality I've discovered. This has been evident in the following ways.

1. Credibility

I have a PhD in American literature with a minor in Shakespeare. Consulting has provided me with valuable, hands-on, professional development in the field of business/technical writing. When I started teaching technical writing, I had to depend on textbooks. Now I can supplement my instruction with anecdotes and examples drawn from companies familiar to my students. Because my students know I go out into the community and work with real businesses, they are more apt to accept the validity of my comments regarding business correspondence. For example, it's one thing to say, "writing is important in business." It is another thing, however, to have students buy this assertion. They are somewhat dubious. Now, when I tell them that a software engineer at Uninet spent three months working on a program and three months writing about it, the assertion has more punch. Now, when I tell them that a boss at North Supply returns his employee's memos, after correcting them in red ink, my students are swayed. Now, when I tell them that a VP at United Telephone has sent 150 management-level employees through a twelve hour business writing seminar, at night, after work, my students become believers.

2. In-class Examples

When I return to college from consulting, I bring with me samples of the actual memos, letters, and reports written at the community's corporations. I use these real examples to supplement my text. As such, my students benefit because they can see the application of business writing in the real world and the kind of writing that is acceptable and will be expected of them.

3. Class Assignments

Finally, my consulting, which provides me hands-on experience with business correspondence, allows me to request in class the kinds of writing activities I see in the corporate world. I try to tailor my class assignments along the lines of the correspondence I read while consulting. In this way, I bridge the gap between the typically hypothetical assignments used in school and the actual writing evident in the corporate tower.

Consulting has been a boon to my career as an educator. By consulting, I have been allowed to stand with one foot in academia and one foot in business. Spanning this gap has allowed me to help my community's businesses with their communiques, promote the value of my college, and better instruct my students. But, of equal importance, consulting has broadened my horizons and offered me a truly rewarding, professional challenge.

COMPLETING THE TASK: CAREER PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

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ABSTRACT

To complete the collegiate education of most students, a final course that should be offered is a course that helps prepare them for the job search. Such a course is Career Placement Procedures. This course includes instruction in selecting appropriate jobs, composing an effective resume, writing a persuasive cover letter, preparing for interviews, and conducting appropriate follow-up procedures.

COMPLETING THE TASK: CAREER PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

In most of the years we have been acquainted with the educational process, there has seemed to be an incomplete process involved. It seems schools take students at some given time and send them out their doors, usually after a prescribed period of years or magic number of credits. At the same time, prospective employers have received these bodies as possible employees. An employer evaluation of former students is usually triggered by the would-be employee applying for a job.

In most instances, the schools do a very poor job in educating the students for this very important step--applying for a job. School personnel seem to think if a student has compiled the required credits for graduation, the student is well educated. This assumption may be true as far as technical competencies are concerned, but the students (as a whole) are mostly just told to get a job without instruction in the specifics of the placement process. Consequently, many of our graduates have trouble finding an adequate career. On the other hand, many employers hire not the best applicants.

In an attempt to help our students present themselves in the best light possible and to help them choose the right types of jobs for their careers, we have instituted a Career Placement Procedure Course. At Illinois State University, this is a one-semester hour course (on an elective basis) that includes five basic units: What can I do and How

do I get there, Presenting qualifications appropriately, Writing the persuasive application letter, Understanding interviews and interviewers, and Follow-up procedures.

What Can I Do and How Do I Get There?

The first unit of this course includes two major aspects; The Placement Office and possible job choices. In this portion of the course, we ask a representative of our Placement Office to address the class on what forms they expect completed, when to file the forms, how to register for interviews, where recruiting materials are located, and what general services the Placement Office offers. This presentation is usually one hour in length and does help the students make the first step toward employment.

The second aspect of the first unit involves some student work. Each student is asked to identify four specific jobs for which they will be qualified upon graduation. This assignment helps the students become more fully acquainted with concrete examples of the types of work they will be involved in and with some new ideas about jobs other than the standard ones.

So the students will have some definite assignments, the first unit includes placing on paper the job requirements for at least four jobs for which they will be qualified and completing a personal history assessment (what we call a PAST form). Additionally, the Placement Office registration materials are to be completed and submitted to the Placement Office before the next class meeting.

Presenting Qualifications Appropriately

The completion of the Placement Office materials and the PAST form lead to the development of an effective resume, the next step in our process. In this unit we discuss topics such as what types of material to include, the sequence of the selected material, duplication of the resume, and the use of the resume in the job-getting process.

In this unit, we acquaint the students with the psychology of effectively sequencing information to achieve the best results. This sequencing is coupled with selecting an appropriate method of physically presenting the material--duplication of the resume.

Writing the Persuasive Application Letter

After completing the resume, the students are required to identify at least five prospective employers. This assignment, made at the end of the second unit, helps the student see there are many firms that might be able to use their individual qualification.

For this third unit, the student is required to write a model application letter to some actual firm for which they might work. In this unit students are exposed to letter mechanics, something with which most have not really concerned themselves. The total approach to letter mechanics is covered including where to type the various parts how to address prospective employers, and how to write the letter.

Discussion includes appropriate material for the opening paragraph (name of company, type of job being applied for, source of information, and clear indication this is an application letter).

The contents of the body of the letter are then discussed with great concern being shown for telling the reader how the applicant's talents can work for them rather than just writing an "I" letter. We emphasize most prospective employers realize the student has basic qualifications but wants to know most just how the company can use them.

Understanding Interviews and Interviewers

Our fourth unit includes discussion of what happens during the various interview stages. We start first with the initial on-campus interview, usually at the Placement Office. This is followed by an introduction to the typical on-site interview through the final offering and acceptance of a job.

The important aspects of the interview include pre-interview analysis of the prospective employer--knowing what the employer produces, where they are located, what usually happens to their new employees. Much of this information is available in the recruiting material sent to the Placement Office.

Through this pre-interview preparation, the student is able to develop some analytical questions to ask the recruiter--questions that will not be intended to stump the recruiter but to make clear the student is aware of the company.

The use of these questions will also allow the student to interact with the recruiter on an adequate base rather than just sit back and answer yes or no to the recruiter's questions. It is important the students know they should be carrying on a natural conversation with the recruiter; these interviews are information-gathering sessions for the student as well as for the recruiter.

Other topics of discussion for this unit include appropriate dress and etiquette for interviews, financial arrangements for on-site visits and methods of appearing natural and at ease during the interviews. We have found most recruiters are favorably impressed with students who show apparent self-confidence along with their technical competencies.

The assignment given for this unit is to develop some fact sheets about prospective employers and a list of questions that will elicit the information students should have before making a career decision.

Follow-up Procedures

In our last unit, discussion focuses on how to follow-up on applications from which no response has been received, procedures for foot-searching of jobs and an objective evaluation of student understanding.

This unit includes instruction on second and third letters to a company, telephone contact and letters of job acceptance and rejection.

We believe it is important for the students to continue contact until either accepted or rejected. At this point, we indicate that some companies are just waiting for the individual initiative of a personal phone call. We also include discussion of thank-you letters the student should write, both to companies from which they have received offers and to companies that have rejected them.

Also included in this unit is discussion of procedures to follow in job-hunting once the student is no longer on campus. We talk of private agencies, public agencies, and personal contact. We emphasize that many times finding the right job (and in some cases, a job) is a long, rigorous process.

As a final portion of the course, we administer an objective examination to measure student understanding of the course topics. At this point, the mean achievement on this test is 88%, an indication of the high rate of student interest in the topic.

Student Evaluation

In addition to the objective final examination, student achievement is evaluated on the completion of a resume, an application letter, a thank-you letter and, many times, on what we call individual initiative. This last is an attempt at forcing the student to do something more than just what the teacher requires.

Course Acceptance

This course was started for business majors to help the college look better in the eyes of employers, but has since expanded to any student who wishes to enroll. As the course requires the student be a senior, we get only those who will be immediately involved in the job-hunting process; consequently, interest is high. As we are limited in the number of sections of this course we can offer, all sections are usually filled to capacity within the first two or three days of pre-registration. The course has become so evident in helping students that we now enroll seniors from all colleges on our campus, not just business majors.

The additional support of this type of course has been voiced many times by employers--it helps students be more selective and accurate in pre-interview selection of prospective employers resulting in less waste of the employers' time.

Students need this final aspect of their education--don't just throw them away with a diploma or a degree. Help them and they will return the favor in the future.

MAKING IT REAL FOR STUDENTS: COMMUNICATION AUDITS TO TEACH COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS

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One of the abiding challenges for teachers of communication is to satisfy undergraduate students' quest for practical value in their courses without sacrificing theoretical substance. Nowhere is this challenge more keen than in the area of organizational communication, where the connection between theory and practice can seem especially vague to undergraduates, since they rarely have the kind of relevant experience in this area that they can bring to a course in, say, interpersonal or mass communication. Most instructors do what they can to demonstrate the practical relevance of organizational communication theory by recounting illustrative personal experiences; by assigning case studies for reading and discussion; or by having students participate in simulations, role plays, and games. But few of these methods succeed in being both engaging and "real."

Several communication scholars have suggested teaching methods designed to respond to the problems of providing practical value and of maintaining theoretical integrity in communication education. Two promising approaches have been outlined recently in the pages of Communication Education. Don W. Stacks and John J. Chalfa, Jr., following the lead of Gerald R. Miller,[1] have proposed an undergraduate research team approach.[2] Denise R. Mier has suggested a case method of teaching organizational communication, in which students develop their own real case studies.[3]

We should like to offer a third instructional approach, one which incorporates the benefits of both the research team and the original case methods in integrating theory and practice and one which, furthermore, provides

experience in using a research tool actually employed by practicing organizational analysts and consultants. The method to which we refer is the use of the communication audit.

BACKGROUND

The idea of communication auditing is not new; Odiorne discussed it in Personnel Psychology thirty years ago.[4] As communication more widely came to be seen as a vital organizational function and the central activity of managers, interest grew for some systematic technique of assessing organizations' "communication health." Over a period of about five years in the early 1970s, the International Communication Association committed substantial resources to the development of audit procedures and instruments.[5] Others have suggested alternate perspectives and procedures.[6]

However they have been conceived and structured, all forms of the communication audit constitute an attempt to examine in detail the communication processes in an organization. The ICA version, which has been the most thoroughly tested and the most widely used in organizational consulting, is a multi-method inquiry that examines the communication philosophy, policies, and practices of an organization. Its primary uses are to monitor and evaluate an organization's communication activities, to identify communication breakdowns and blockages, and to provide information about the communication system that can be used as a basis for organizational development. In addition to showing how communication works in an organization, the audit can also provide a good picture of the organization's communication climate.

We submit that this instrument can be of considerable instructional value for students of organizational communication. R. Wayne Pace and Robert F. Ross, in their study of the basic course in organizational communication, discovered that of the 100 colleges and universities responding to their

survey 68 offered courses that devoted one half to three full class periods to the topic of communication auditing or analysis.[7] This suggests that a majority of instructors see the topic as important enough to discuss. It appears that students are informed that auditing is what some communication researchers do in looking at communication in organizations and perhaps are told something about how an audit is performed. But judging from the Pace and Ross survey, no one has students actually carry out a communication audit in a real organization. Yet it is as an instructional method--an activity performed by students--that we suggest the communication audit can be most useful.

COURSE DESIGN

To introduce undergraduate students to the basic concepts and theories in the field of organizational communication, we designed a course which would focus on the application of these concepts and theories to "real life" communication problems in organizations. Our belief was that if students actually had to confront live communication processes and try to explain them, identify problems, and suggest remedies, they would better understand and more truly learn the subject matter of the course and be better prepared to work in organizations, whatever their academic majors or planned occupations, but particularly if they were headed toward management, public relations, or other "communication-intensive" positions.

There were six primary objectives of the course:

1. To increase students' understanding of how organizations operate.
2. To increase students' awareness and knowledge of communication as it occurs in organizations.
3. To develop students' competencies in identifying and analyzing

communication problems in organizations.

4. To develop students' skills and understanding related to solving communication problems in organizations.
5. To contribute significantly to students' career preparation.
6. To develop students' practical research skills.

The course was set up to use three teaching methods:

1. Lecture/discussion,
2. Case studies/role plays/group exercises,
3. Communication audit.

The first half of the semester was devoted to exploring organizational and communication concepts and theories using a combination of lecture/discussion and case studies/role plays/group exercises. Part of our aim in using role plays and group exercises was to get students accustomed to group work in preparation for the rather intensive collaboration that would be required of them later in the course when they became audit research teams. About halfway through the semester the audit was introduced and explained, and the students were trained in the research methods necessary to perform the audit--in this instance, the administration and analysis of questionnaires and interviews. Having identified local organizations willing to be audited, we then formed research teams of about six members each and the group embarked on the audit, a project that would occupy about the last six weeks of the semester. The class continued to meet as usual during the period when audits were being conducted, except that one of our three weekly meetings was given over entirely to audit research team meetings and our discussions in other sessions were concerned largely with the problems students were encountering and the discoveries they were making. Throughout the semester, readings were assigned from textbooks and supplemental sources. Students' mastery of

organizational communication concepts was tested with three hourly examinations.

RESULTS

To assess the outcomes of the teaching methods used in the course, we conducted two types of evaluation. The first was an informal, impressionistic assessment of students' gains from the course based on comments made by students during the audit phase of the course, on their apparent enthusiasm for and commitment to the work, and on the quality of the audit groups' final written reports. Our biases in favor of our own teaching notwithstanding, these informal measures were encouraging. By the end of the course three students--only one of whom was a speech communication major--had asked about opportunities for assisting as interns in the same course when it was taught again, and shortly after the end of the course two other students--both of whom were speech communication majors--had on their own arranged to perform a communication audit of the regional administrative body that governs several local public school districts. As for the audit reports, they were accurate and thorough and comparable in content, form, and style to similar reports we have seen prepared by graduate students and professional consultants (some of whom are communication scholars).

The second form of evaluation was a brief questionnaire administered to all students in the course on the last day of class. Responding anonymously to a set of five point scales (1 = lowest possible rating, 5 = highest possible rating), students rated each of the three main instructional methods--lecture/discussion, case studies/role plays/group exercises, communication audit--as to its value or effectiveness in accomplishing the objectives of the course. The questionnaire, along with mean responses for each item, is

4. How valuable was each of the teaching methods in developing your skills and understanding related to solving real problems in organizational communication? The communication audit was rated as significantly more valuable than either lecture/discussion ($t = 5.38$, $df = 30$, $p < .001$) or case studies/role plays/group exercises ($t = 9.99$, $df = 30$, $p < .001$).

5. To what extent was each type of course experience worthwhile in terms of your career preparation? The communication audit was rated as significantly more worthwhile than either lecture/discussion ($t = 3.50$, $df = 30$, $p < .001$) or case studies/role plays/group exercises ($t = 5.52$, $df = 30$, $p < .001$).

In addition to asking students to rate the effectiveness or value of each instructional method, the questionnaire attempted to assess the degree to which the activities related to the communication audit helped to develop students' practical research skills. These findings are reported in Table II.

Insert Table II Here

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

From these results, the communication audit appears to have been, from the students' standpoint, an appealing and effective instrumental tool. It contributed significantly more to students' achievement of the overall course objectives than any other teaching method, particularly those objectives related to developing skills and competencies in identifying, analyzing, and solving communication problems. It is quite clear, too, that sending students into places of business and other organizational settings to ask questions and observe helped students improve basic research skills and understand fundamental concepts far better than they would have had

presented in Table I. The 31 completed questionnaires were subjected to

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Insert Table 1 Here

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multiple t-tests (two-tailed) comparing the effectiveness or value of the communication audit with the effectiveness or value of each of the other instructional methods in achieving each of the main goals of the course. Findings are summarized below.

1. To what extent did each of the teaching methods increase your understanding of how organizations operate? The communication audit was rated as increasing such understanding to a significantly greater extent that either lecture/discussion ($t = 5.44$, $df = 29$, $p < .001$) or case studies/role plays/group exercises ($t = 9.13$, $df = 29$, $p < .001$).
2. To what extent did each of the teaching methods increase your awareness and knowledge of communication as it occurs in organizations? The communication audit was rated as increasing such knowledge to a significantly greater extent than either lecture/discussion ($t = 3.29$, $df = 29$, $p < .005$) or case studies/role plays/group exercises ($t = 6.90$, $df = 29$, $p < .001$).
3. To what extent do you feel you have become more competent in identifying and analyzing communication problems in organizations as a result of each teaching method? The communication audit was rated as increasing such competency to a significantly greater extent than either lecture/discussion ($t = 5.11$, $df = 30$, $p < .001$) or case studies/role plays/group exercises ($t = 9.32$, $df = 30$, $p < .001$).

they been confined to classroom discussion and exercises.

Besides accomplishing the specific objectives of the course, we believe the audit activities can produce beneficial "side effects" in a number of ways. First, conducting the audit demands that students plan and coordinate their efforts, make some important decisions as a group, and behave in a professional manner. They are, after all, responsible for maintaining a consultant-client relationship with an organization. Second, the audit activities not only provide experience in research techniques and data analysis but also put into students' hands information that is very much alive and in which people other than themselves have a considerable stake. Good judgment is as important as communication knowledge. Finally, each student audit group must prepare a professional quality written report of its activities and findings, which not only completes the class project but is presented to the client organization. Each audit group, furthermore, has the option to follow up the written report with an oral "debriefing" session for its client organization. These experiences make wonderful resumé material and might, for a rare student, even lead directly to an internship or employment with a client organization.

Another hoped-for outcome of using the communication audit as a teaching method is what we might call "radiating effects." Since students must carry out their studies in real local organizations, the audit can be a way for the college or university to serve the local business community, a "contact point" that benefits both parties. Careful preparation of students before they take on the audit and close monitoring of their progress can ensure that a responsible study is carried out, one that can tell the working manager important things about his or her organization. The final report which is delivered to the organization should, among other things, greatly help the organization to

identify communication problems and take steps toward their resolution. Because communication auditing has considerable appeal for buinesses and other organizations, word of students' good work will very likely move rapidly through the community, increasing the visibility of the sponsoring department and enhancing support for its programs. One small but important payoff might simply be requests for more audits, but other kinds of cooperative arrangements are also likely to result.

USING THE COMMUNICATION AUDIT

It is important to note here the issues that instructors need to consider before making the communication audit a part of their courses. These matters include identifying organizations to audit--whether to be done by students or by instructor; grouping students and matching them with client organizations--whether through self selection, random assignment, or some combination; establishing and maintaining a working relationship with the client organizations--whether the instructor should intervene and how much; determining what research methods to use--questionnaire, interview, critical incident, diary, participant observation; and scheduling--where to place the audit in the course and how much time to spend doing it.

Let us consider each of these concerns in turn. The first issues--identifying organizations to audit, forming student audit groups and matching them with client organizations, and establishing and maintaining working relationships with client organizations--we will discuss briefly together. We have tried different approaches for making these initial arrangements and believe that any instructor ought to choose the methods that seem most sensible and workable considering the organizations available on campus and in the community and the sort of students with whom one is working. We recently have had very good luck with students identifying organizations to

audit. We asked them to give us the name of an organization which they believed might cooperate with our class, usually because either they are or have been members or they know someone who is a member. From a list of a dozen or so student suggestions it is probably possible to draw four to six appropriate, willing organizations. For an organization to be "appropriate" we look for 20-40 members and at least two levels of authority or responsibility. Once a sufficient number of suitable organizations are identified, student groups can be formed and matched to organizations by whatever means are acceptable to the students and will satisfy the instructor's interest in having cooperative, responsible research teams. We have managed this quite smoothly by asking students to give us, in rank order, their first three choices of organizations to audit; then we group students on the basis of their ranked preferences. As for establishing and maintaining the client-consultant relationship, we like to make a follow up call to the organization after a student has been given its approval to conduct the audit. From that point on, however, we leave the relationship in the hands of the student audit groups. Before they make any contact past the first inquiry as to whether the organization might permit an audit, students are made fully aware of what the organization's concerns are likely to be (e.g., confidentiality), what their responsibilities to the organization are, and overall what kind of behavior is expected of them in their work with the organization. We believe our students have demonstrated a good degree of maturity, responsibility, and professionalism in this endeavor, and our cooperating organizations for the most part have concurred.

As to the matter of research methods, we are committed to the notion of triangulation[8] and believe that, if the communication audit is to achieve the two goals of providing an accurate account of communication in an

organization and of giving undergraduate students sound early training in research, multiple methods are required. Our choices of instruments have been questionnaires and interviews because they are reasonably reliable, produce a good data base, and are manageable in the time available during the course. Administering the questionnaires--which are adaptations of the ICA Communication Audit Survey[9] and Litwin and Stringer's climate questionnaire[10]--requires little training, so attention can be focused on training for interviewing and for coding and analysis of the questionnaire data.

Other data gathering techniques are, of course, available and have value in auditing organizational communication. However, we believe they present problems that make them ill-suited for use in the audits performed as class projects. Communication diaries are problematic in that they require more time and effort than many subjects are willing to invest, and student researchers need to be trained in content analysis and the use of involved coding schemes. Descriptions of critical communication incidents or episodes may be solicited as part of a questionnaire, but our experience suggests that asking for just two or three makes the questionnaire unduly long, and response rate tends to be low. Respondents either skip them entirely or provide the first and skip the others. Participant observation is an excellent method for gathering audit information but has the drawbacks of requiring enormous amounts of time in the field setting and of requiring extensive training in observing, recording, and analyzing behavior specimens. While all of these research methods have the potential to provide rich and useful information, interviewing can provide much of the same information and works better within the time constraints of the course.

In sampling subjects, our approach has been to administer the questionnaires to all members of the organization or portion thereof being audited and to interview enough members so that everybody on the audit team

participates in two or three interviews. Selection of interviewees may be done randomly, on the basis of members' status as "key" or especially well informed members, or in such a way as to capture a sense of the organization's authority strata or member demographics.

With respect to the issue of scheduling, it is obvious that a period of preparation is necessary before students can intelligently carry out the audit. We believe this preparation should include not only familiarizing students with the audit itself but also building a solid foundation of organization and communication theory and concepts. For us, that has occupied approximately the first half of a semester. It is conceivable that the audit could be carried out earlier in a semester and used as the base of experience and data in which to ground understandings about organizational communication developed through the audit process. To a considerable extent, the audit serves this "grounding" function even when it is conducted later in the course; this is part of its beauty as an instructional tool. But approached without first having a sound set of concepts, the audit risks being less well focused and coherent, and it becomes less an exercise in helping an organization than a self-serving fact finding mission.

Conducting the audit requires about six weeks, not including making initial contacts and making arrangements for the delivery, distribution, and collection of survey instruments. Client organizations ought to be encouraged to complete questionnaires within the first week. During that first week, members of the audit research team should set up interviews which will be conducted over the next two weeks. While interviewing is going on, the group can be collecting lingering questionnaires and receiving training in coding and analysis of the survey data.

By the fourth week, assuming the data collection is nearly completed, the audit group ought to prepare brief--perhaps three to five pages--preliminary reports describing their activities and findings to date with little interpretation as to the meanings of what has been observed. We suggest the following general outline for the preliminary report:

I. Context of audit--dates, times, settings for data collection.

II. Number of instruments distributed, response rates.

III. Number of interviews, how subjects were selected.

IV. Findings--mean responses for all questionnaire items, themes running through interviews.

The preliminary report is written as if it were a professional progress report for the organization. In fact, it does not go to the organization and students know this. But it is very valuable, we think, partly because it is the sort of thing they might be expected to do if they were acting as paid consultants but more because it serves as an interim point at which the audit group reviews the context of its work and the "facts" it has produced and practices reporting these things in writing. While these reports carry relatively little grade weight in our course, we do critique them in detail, part of our aim being to leave the students with no doubts as to the quality expected in their final reports.

The final stage of the work involves interpreting the findings of the questionnaires and interviews and developing a final report. Because audit groups need to meet quite a number of hours to settle on strengths and weaknesses of the organizational communication system under study, to formulate recommendations for the organization, and to write and rewrite the final report, we allow two weeks for this final phase of the audit. Even so,

groups generally feel quite pressured at this point. As instructors, we work closely with individual audit groups during this period, often meeting with them outside of class time to work through this critical and difficult interpretation stage.

Of course, this six week time frame is flexible, but we believe six weeks is probably the minimum time in which anyone should attempt to conduct communication audits as part of the instructional methodology for a one semester course. The importance of the project to the client organization and its values for both the client and the student auditors demand that it not be rushed or cut short.

There is no question that the communication audit is a demanding project for both students and teachers. But the rewards are many, and it promises to be one of the best means we in organizational communication have of integrating theory and practice.

NOTES

[1]Gerald R. Miller, "The Research Team Concept: An Approach to Graduate Training," Communication Education, 28 (Sept. 1979), 322-327.

[2]Don W. Stacks and John J. Chalfa, Jr., "The Undergraduate Research Team: An Applied Approach to Communication Education," Communication Education, 30 (April 1981), 180-183.

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[4]G. Odiorne, "An Application of the Communication Audit," Personnel Psychology, 7 (1954), 235-243.

[5]Gerald M. Goldhaber and Donald P. Rogers, Auditing Organizational Communication Systems: The ICA Communication Audit (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/ Hunt Publishing Co., 1979), p. v-vi.

[6]For example, Howard H. Greenbaum's conceptual structure and Osmo Wiio's LTT Communication Audit.

[7]R. Wayne Pace and Robert F. Ross, "The Basic Course in Organizational Communication," Communication Education, 32 (Oct. 1983), 402-412.

[8]One of the best arguments for triangulation of methodologies is given by Norman K. Denzin in The Research Act, 2nd ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978), chapter 10.

[9]See Goldhaber and Rogers.

[10]See George H. Litwin and Robert A. Stringer, Jr., Motivation and Organizational Climate, (Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1968).

TEACHING THE SHORT REPORT IN A CORPORATE CLIMATE

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ABSTRACT

A sequence of six 2-hour workshops in report writing was designed and conducted for professional personnel of a corporation in the aerospace industry. The training, delivered on site, focused on how to write the short report in line with needs and expectations of the audiences involved. Accordingly, this paper identifies (1) the assessment process, (2) the major writing problem, (3) the solution, and (4) the guidelines used for designing and delivering the training.

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes an approach used to teach the short report in a corporate climate. The author completed this project during the winter of 1984. The corporation involved was a manufacturing company in the aerospace industry. The participants in the six 2-hour workshops included engineers, technicians, project planners, and finance personnel (16 in all) who devoted from 10 to 15 percent of their working time to writing business and technical reports largely for internal audiences.

The overall approach used for this project involved these steps: (1) assessing writing needs through informal discussions, (2) identifying the major writing problem to be addressed by the training, (3) formulating a solution to the problem, and (4) developing guidelines for designing and implementing effective training. All training was conducted at the corporate site.

ASSESSING THE CORPORATE NEED

The writing needs of the company participants were identified through exploratory discussions with the corporate trainer, management personnel, and prospective participants.

The corporate trainer suggested a general need for report writing improvement. A more specific need was identified through discussions with management personnel selected by the corporate trainer. Further

discussions with several prospective participants provided insights into the kinds and extent of writing development sought.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Although discussions with the corporate trainer and prospective participants yielded a need for general report writing improvement, the conversations with management personnel focused on the need for writing effective short reports. Managers provided sample reports that they had found unsatisfactory. These reports, written by subordinates, frequently had to be rewritten by supervisors for further upward communication that often reached top management.

Managers identified three common problems with the reports they received from subordinates. These problems included reports (1) containing lengthy, complex data without accompanying explanation, (2) providing insufficient perspective for attached data, and (3) interpreting data in near unreadable form--in lengthy sentences and paragraphs with no headings or other means of visibility.

FOCUSING ON THE SOLUTION

Since management insisted that reports they receive get to the point quickly by providing perspective, visibility, and readability, the evaluation instrument developed by the author stated these points as criteria: In short, managers wanted any report they receive to (1) provide orientation to purpose, rationale, and organization of the report; (2) introduce, organize, label, and interpret any significant data; (3) put the data into focus by giving a point of reference and by relating conclusions or recommendations; (4) make the contents of the report visible through headings, italics, and listings; and (5) ensure readability through short sentences and paragraphs, appropriate vocabulary, and effective transitions.

PLANNING AND DELIVERING THE TRAINING

The workshop sessions were tailored around the topics of interest determined during the first session through a survey instrument developed by the author. The results of this survey, summarized in Table 1, rank the preferences of the participants on the basis of a Likert-scale analysis (from strongly agree = 4 to strongly disagree = -4).

The results of this preference inventory indicated a strong desire by participants for help in (1) knowing how to improve their own writing, (2) writing effective reports more easily and quickly, (3) making their reports clearer and more concise for their supervisors, and (4) summarising and putting data into useful perspective. Of moderate preference

TABLE 1

PREFERENCE INVENTORY RESULTS

Rank	Preference	*Mean Score
1	Knowing how to evaluate my own writing so that I can improve it.	3.25
2	Writing effective reports more easily and quickly than I do now.	3.19
3	Making my reports clearer and more concise so that my supervisor knows what I'm talking about right away.	3.13
4	Summarizing data so I can point out what is important and put it into useful perspective.	2.81
5	Planning of a report.	2.47
6	Feeling more comfortable with writing reports. (I get frustrated when I have to write a report.)	2.06
7	Finding out what my supervisor expects and prefers in the reports I send him/her.	1.94
8	Writing gramatically correct sentences and paragraphs.	1.06
9	Correctly punctuating my writing.	0.88

*Mean score based upon a Likert-scale analysis (from strongly agree = 4 to strongly disagree = -4) with N = 16.

were (5) planning a report, (6) feeling more comfortable with report writing, and (7) finding out what their supervior wants in a report. The relatively low ranking of this preference was symptomatic of the problems identified by their managers. In short, participants did not feel that assessing their audience was all that important in their report writing efforts. Finally, low in their order of preference were (8) writing gramatically correct sentences and paragraphs, and (9) correctly punctuating their writing.

Topics included in the six-week sequence were: (1) benefits of effective report writing, (2) common problems in writing short reports, (3) the nature of the writing process, (4) report objectives, (5) audience assessment, (6) data display and analysis, (7) visibility and readability, (8) the executive summary, and (9) helping others to write better.

Each session opened with a progress discussion encouraging participants to share problems and solutions in their own reports. The balance of each session emphasized discussions and activites relating to the topics planned.

After three sessions a written evaluation was conducted to discover the success of the previous sessions and to determine the focus needed for the following instruction. The content of the instrument included ten questions which elicited a Likert-scale response. Questions 11 and 12 were open-ended, and Question 13 provided an overall rating. The questions were:

SO FAR:

1. The sessions have been related to my technical report writing needs.
2. I have felt free to ask questions.
3. I have been encouraged to participate in the activites.
4. Questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
5. The sessions have kept my interest.
6. The activities have been worthwhile.
7. The time has been well spent.
8. I have learned from the sessions.
9. I have found the reading materials useful.
10. I have found the assignments useful.
11. What I have found to be particularly useful so far:
12. What I would recommend for the rest of the sessions:
13. Overall I would rate the sessions so far (circle one):
    Excellent Good Fair Poor

One of the more valuable activities, as indicated by the participants, was displaying their own reports on overhead transparencies and gaining a critique from their colleagues. Further, the success of this report was dependent upon teaching to the actual report writing needs of the audience.

Texts particularly helpful in this workshop are listed in the references.

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REACHING ALL OF YOUR PUBLICS

Organizational Communications and a Public School Tax Election

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During the summer of 1983, the superintendent of the Ames School District decided to begin publishing a monthly newsletter. This publication would meet two needs. The first need was to have better general organizational communications reaching all of the publics, both internal and external to the district, and the second was to prepare these publics for a campaign to raise school taxes.

A tax levy campaign is difficult to put on at any time, but in a year when drought devastated the state's economy, winning a tax vote was a near impossibility. If the district was to win its campaign, its publication had to successfully and openly deal with these two issues.

The two issues of good schools and financial need were foremost in the minds of the newsletter editor when the task of identifying an audience came up. Just whom was this newsletter to reach?

In public relations the trend is to package people into common groups (publics) with common needs and then design communications to meet these needs. Obvious publics would include taxpayers, teachers, students, parents, and administrators. However, especially in education people fit into several groups. Teachers, for example, are often taxpayers as well as parents. The key decision was made to address many

publics rather than the "general public" but to begin with the internal public first.

The internal public includes the staff and those directly associated with the school district--teachers, administrators, maintenance workers, clerical staff, bus drivers, and the like. Often, staff members are insufficiently informed to talk publicly about local school issues under consideration. With the newsletter, we hoped to remedy this situation. The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) publication Building Public Confidence in Your School warns that no one is more detrimental to a school district's image than an uninformed employee, who spends less than 20 percent of his or her life each year at work and more than 80 percent out in the community.

The next step after identifying the audience, was to inform the staff of the exceptional quality of the Ames Schools. To begin, the district chose a name for the publication, Classnotes, which pointed to both the importance of the classroom and the high "class" quality of the schools. In the first issue of Classnotes the lead article, headed "Ames Schools Among the Best," described how both Ames Junior High School and Ames Senior High School came to be chosen among the 144 exemplary schools in 37 states. A copy of letters to the principals from T. H. Bell, U.S. Secretary of Education, accompanied the article as an illustration. In

addition, a letter to the editor of the local newspaper appeared on the front page. Entitled "Why was Ames Chosen?" this article gave everyone involved in education in Ames a pat on the back.

The principal of providing a good news buffer for a future negative message carried over into the second issue, which came out October 1. The second issue complimented district staff on a smooth school opening, welcomed new support personnel, and heralded a new monthly column, "A Good Idea," which each month would honor a different staff person for an innovative idea.

The first two issues of Classnotes also attacked the problem of editorial credibility. The staff at first viewed the new publication as a tool of the administration, even though an editorial committee had been meeting since the summer to decide on questions such as what articles should be included and what formats should be used. To counter the skepticism of groups like the Ames Teachers' Association, Classnotes tackled two controversial subjects in the second Classnotes. First, an article about delay in personnel changes answered questions raised by a member of the editorial board. And, another article interviewed the new Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, a position viewed by many teachers as a watchdog job.

After the "good news" messages of the first two issues, the third issue's negative message came out. "Money Woes Hit

the District," the lead article, described the major fiscal crisis facing the district and first presented the alternatives of increased taxes or reduced programs and services to students. The article explaining the complicated financial position of the school district read like a short technical report including background, need, problem, and possible solutions. In addition, a graphic of divided silver dollars depicted where school funds come from and how the district spends these funds. The graphics were included to insure that the external public, to whom this third issue would go, would understand the plight of the district.

The fact that this third issue of Classnotes would reach many people in the general community of Ames prompted not only an explanation of fiscal policy, but also a reiteration of the educational success of the school district. Included in this third issue were articles headed "Ames Recognized at White House," "Ames Leads the State in Standardized Tests," and "Merit Scholars a Tradition." In addition, the article "District Teachers Well Educated," complimented teachers with a positive message that their work contributed to these student successes.

The Editorial Committee decided the theme of the fourth issue of Classnotes. At their suggestion, the whole issue was devoted to computer use in the school district. Although some articles addressed computer use in various curricula

areas such as music, writing, counseling, and science, other articles described computer use by non-certified personnel. For example, an article about a computerized french fryer portrayed school cooks in their roles as members of the school community. Another article about computer bookkeeping in the school library system helped bring the importance of library aides to the public's attention.

The computer theme of the fourth issue which came out December 1 did not neglect the subject of school finances. For it was during December that the local school board would first address the issue of extensive funding for computer based programs for the district. The lead article, in fact, headed "Computers--Literacy or Methodology," described a report made at the November School Board meeting. The report and the article described the alternatives of training students in computer literacy or making computers the common mode of instruction. Citizens keeping up with School Board proceedings could see that school personnel were weighing financial as well as educational decisions very carefully.

The fifth issue of Classnotes came out February 1, exactly 2 weeks before the tax levy election on February 14. Again, the newsletter was designed to meet the informational needs of the entire local community. This very important issue accomplished the following three tasks: it restated the district's fiscal problems; it described various successes

in the school district; and it identified as school supporters several community groups potentially opposed to the tax increase.

First, the lead article on page 1 announced the School Board's decision to ask for a tax increase. This article rehashed several previous issues concerning the Ames School District's financial woes. Again, articles described how the combination of inflation and reduced State aid caused the district to cut over $500,000 from its current programs and services to children. The only other article sharing the front page was headed "Board Meets with Legislators." Designed to link fiscal problems with state policy, this article also demonstrated the district's unsuccessful attempts to solve fiscal problems without a tax increase.

In addition to the articles on the need for a tax increase, issue number five of Classnotes stressed the successes in the district. In fact, four major articles had the word "success" in the headline. One of these articles, "Success Indicators," listed district programs that received special recognition. It also told of student accomplishment in testing scores. In addition, the page facing the "Success Indicators" article listed the Class of 1983 Scholarship winners superimposed over a screened graphic of a graduation.

To show that Ames School District students can attain success in other areas, articles were written about art for

special education students, vocational education programs for non-college bound students, and a history project for students who have difficulty with reading and other study skills. These articles specifically addressed parents who felt the district might spend all the tax money on programs for college preparatory classes.

Besides the articles targeting parents, the fifth Classnotes also contained articles with appeal to Ames citizens who neither worked in the school system nor had school age children. One of these articles, "Working Together for Success," described vocational education programs and credited local businesses which participated in them. Another article, "Community Education," described programs for adult citizens.

A third success-oriented article, about an exchange program between two senior citizen programs and fifth graders at two local elementary schools, addressed a potentially negative audience. Senior citizens traditionally vote against tax increases because the elderly are faced with fixed incomes and other economic problems. If the district was to neutralize this opposition, senior citizens had to be made aware of their role as members of the school community. This strategy was so successful in Ames that one senior citizen group actually helped with the election and even folded and labeled the newsletters for mailing.

With the help of many of its publics, the Ames School

District was successful in its February 14th tax election. Effective communication between the district and its internal and external publics yielded a more than sixty percent positive vote for the tax increase. It also produced new school district supporters. And finally, good school communications provided Ames with more informed local citizens.

PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS INTO THE ACCOUNTING CURRICULUM AND DEVELOPING SEMINARS AND/or MINI COURSES

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Introduction

Because of the increasing need for competency in communication in business and the profession, it is a professional necessity for accountants and other professionals to express themselves in understandable, explicit, unambiguous, intelligible English. Anything short of this can be self-defeating, potentially misleading, and possibly disastrous to clients and customers.

Effective communication is so important for all professions, but for the accountant it has been suggested that candidates who can not write the English Language at least up to a minimum threshold should be denied admission to the profession. As accounting is a leading major emphasis in most schools or colleges of business, the business communication teacher is empowered with tne responsibility of training the accountant to communicate effectively.

Accountants and those responsible for training the accountant agree that the accountant graduates generally are not prepared adequately, and they see the expressed need to provide training in communication for the prospective accountant beyond the general business communication and/or business report writing. This need opens the door for the business communication teacher to provide valuable service by working with accountant and/or accounting department to help prepare students to perform the communication task of their profession.

The purpose of this report is to suggest some practical approaches for integrating business communication into the accounting curriculum and developing seminars and/or mini courses. Although this paper will focus on business communication in accounting, the suggestions are applicable for any specialized area.

The Role of the Business Communication Teacher

As Arthur E. Carlson pointed out, "For several decades; business managers have expressed their concern over deficiencies in the oral and written communications skills possessed by business school graduates. Invariably, when company recruiters are asked to rank deficiencies found in the newly

hired products of business schools, they place "inability to communicate" at or near the top to the list.[1]

Because the accounting departments at some of the major universities appear to be crying the loudest to fill the gap in the business communication preparation of its students, their specialized area was chosen for study. The following report not only offers suggestions for integrating business communication into the accounting curriculum, but also offers some practical approaches to integrating communication into an accounting course and developing seminars and or mini-courses. The Business Communication Teacher is the one adequately prepared for this task. This information will provide insight into how the business communication teacher can better serve the accounting profession by offering special help to the accounting department or serving as a consultant to accounting firms. It has further implications because the guidelines are applicable to other specialized areas.

Basis of this Report

This report is based on practical suggestions developed from two areas:

A survey of business communication competencies needed by accountants and Bankers. This survey was conducted by R. Neil Dortch and Pernell Hewing of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and Meada Gibbs of North Carolina A & T State University. The participants of the study were 169 accountants and 142 bankers from the private sector in the states of North Carolina and Wisconsin. Questionnaires were mailed to these practicing accountants and bankers seeking information on the frequency of the communication tasks performed on the job and what type of training (in their opinion) was needed to prepare them to perform these tasks. The findings of this study provided directions for improving the communication training for the accountant and banker. The respondents of the study pointed out special need for training in the following areas:

1. Letters and Memos
2. Techniques of Gathering Data
3. Importance and Role of Reports in Industry
4. Reports for Special Audience
5. Planning and Organizing the Report
6. Writing Style including Simple Language, Conciseness, Adaptation, Readability, Sentence Structure, Clarity, and Concreteness
7. Writing Mechanics or Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling
8. Use of Graphic Aids
9. Preparation of Reports: Letter, Memorandum, Long Formal, Justification, Feasibility, Information, Examination, Progress Reports and Reports Describing a Process

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[1]Carlson, Arthur E., "An Innovative Accounting Experiment in Oral and Written Communications Improvement." Collegiate News & Views, Winter 1981-82, p. 1.

10. Writing Analytical Reports
11. Oral Reports and Oral Presentations
12. Microcomputer and Word Processing Literacy

Armed with this information as to special training needs in business communication for the specialized area of accounting, one can then offer some practical suggestions and practical approaches for integrating these topical areas into the accounting curriculum.

Seminars Prepared for Accountants and Accounting Teachers. Two Seminars were developed for a Faculty Summer Seminar for The Institute of Certified Accountants. The participants were accountants and accounting professors from colleges and universities across the country. These guidelines were further refined as a similar seminar was presented to two regional conferences and the American Accounting Association. The participants of the regional conferences of the AAA were deans of colleges of businesses and chairmen of accounting departments. The purpose of these seminars was to provide some guidelines for integrating business communication into the accounting curriculum.

STEPS FOR INTEGRATING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION INTO THE ACCOUNTING CURRICULUM

The major decision that must be made when confronted with integration of business communication into the accounting curriculum--or the curriculum of a specialized area-is deciding whether to modify existing courses to include the information for teaching the communication skills or to initiate a special course. Whether one is to integrate or to offer a separate course in communication for that specialized area, the following must be accomplished:

Review the accounting curriculum

1. Involve faculty in the integration process
   a. Accounting faculty
   b. Business communication faculty

2. Obtain the cooperation of all accounting teachers

3. Determine business communication competencies to be taught
   a. Identify goals and objectives
   b. Identify content
   c. Determine communication competencies needed

Reviewing the Accounting Curriculum.

The review of the accounting curriculum can help one decide on the alternative of whether to offer separate seminar/workshop or course or integrate into existing courses.

To be successful at integrating communication into the curriculum, one must obtain the cooperation of all accounting teachers. The teachers could help formulate objectives and determine the competencies to be taught. Successful integration, therefore, requires the cooperative effort of each accounting faculty.

Involving Accounting Faculty in the Integration Process

The accounting faculty could:

1. Appoint or elicit a volunteer to direct the accounting faculty in integration of communication into the accounting curriculum

2. Develop a statement of communication goals
   a. Survey the full-time faculty to determine the number and description of writing assignments in courses which they teach.
   b. Meet with faculty to determine major problems

3. Decide to attack writing problems by integrating communication instruction into all accounting courses.

4. Devise an evaluation sheet useful for grading writing or for self-evaluation by students.

The Business Communication Teacher as Consultant to Accounting

The business communication teacher could:

1. Meet with accounting faculty and students to determine major problems.

2. Develop and design innovative approaches to improve communication skills for accounting.

3. Devise corrective strategies to improve communication applicable across the accounting curriculum.

4. Assist accounting professors in developing instructional materials and in lecturing to classes on facets of communication specifically related to course assignments.

5. Design and implement mini-courses and/or workshops to teach methodology useful in improving communication competencies.

Modifying Existing Courses to Provide More Communication Skills

To ascertain the competencies needed to complete communication task frequently performed on the job, one can interview or conduct a mail survey of practitioners to determine communication tasks frequently used on the job. Then to incorporate these skills into existing courses the following guidelines can be offered to accounting instruction:

A. Assess writing and speaking skills

   1. Have student write one-page essay on reason for choosing accounting as a career.

   2. Have student write an autobiography.

3. Have student write a paragraph on a given topic.

4. Have each student introduce and talk for one minute or more about self.

B. Practical Suggestions for Providing Writing and Speaking Experiences for accounting students.

1. Give essay examinations and evaluate them for basic language skills.

2. Have students interview practicing accountants and write a brief report.

3. Team with communication professor to improve written and oral skills using an accounting context. Make assignments on particular accounting topics which involve writing and have communication teacher evaluate the written output and conduct conferences aimed at remedying the deficiencies discussed.

4. Encourage class oral participation.

5. Make oral report assignment tied to club activity e.g. Beta Alpha Psi, Alobeam Society, other.

6. Organize a Toastmaster Club.

C. Evaluate Student Written Assignments for Basic Communication Skills

1. Devote five or ten minutes discussing communication errors found in papers.

The Separate Course/Seminar/Workshop

When looking at alternatives, one can consider the separate course developed for the specialized area. The separate communication course should be designed specifically to prepare students for the communication task of the area. Decide if the information will be presented in a semester, quarter, summer, or some other specified time. Also, on what level will the course/seminar/workshop be offered. The following can be considered for the course?

1. A two-or three-credit communication course

2. This course may replace the regular business communication course or may complement it.

3. Suggested areas of study

a. Review of basic language skills

b. Composition of business letters and memos

c. Reports & other business correspondence

d. Listening, responding, and dictation techniques

e. Proper conduct for business meetings

f. Interpersonal communication

g. Oral presentation/oral communication

h. Proper interview techniques

i. Correct telephone techniques

4. The faculty: A business communication or English teacher

Summary

To integrate communication into the accounting curriculum or any specialized area requires much planning. One can consider either an integration or a separation to teach the communication skills needed to perform the task of the profession. Regardless to the alternative choses, one must obtain the cooperation of the faculty of the specialized area and meet and decide the competencies needed to perform the task of the profession. This can be done by surveying practioners in the field.

The separate course is ideal, but decision must be made as to whether it will be one-, two-, or three-credit course, whether it will replace or complement the basic business communication course, who will teach the course, and what units of instruction should be included.

Since the business communication has a responsibility to prepare students for the communication task of the job, the business communication teacher is urged to develop guidelines to assist specialized areas such as accounting to meet that responsibility. This report offers suggestions for implementing the task of helping these areas integrate communication into their curriculum.

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LOST OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS; NEW BEGINNINGS FOR TEACHERS OF PROFESSIONAL WRITING

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ABSTRACT

Because of the collapsed teaching market in the Humanities, the increased disillusionment of graduate students in the adequacy of their own programs, and the resulting changes in attitude about career-choices as a consequence of the economic upheavals throughout the 1970's, significant reassessments have taken place - both personally and institutionally - which are helping to re-shape our thinking about teaching for the economic growth of the nation in a period of educational crisis. Hard times have produced teachers who are more accomodating to the needs of the larger society, more tolerant of capitalistic values, and better able to relate to the wider interests of the business and professional community.

Based upon the results of its most recent survey, assessing the academic job markets in English and Foreign Languages, the Modern Language Association (MLA), in its Winter Newsletter to the membership, made the following observations:

> Those who pursue a Ph.D. in modern languages may not do so with the certainty of a career in teaching, and many who are now teaching full-time may not be able to do so permanently.
>
> Ph.D.'s in growing numbers are pursuing careers other than teaching: nearly sixteen percent of the Ph.D.'s are engaged in careers ranging from academic administration to business.

The actual number of doctorate degrees granted in English in the years 1981-1982 (817) was the lowest in several years - down

from the high point, reached in 1972-1973 (1455). And, of these 817 graduates, only 39% were hired into "tenure-track" appointments. Another 20% did find employement in teaching positions, but they were either renewable or non-renewable, non-tenured track positions.

The implications of these facts seem clear enough: there has been a considerable decline in numbers of graduates (reflecting, undoubtedly, the shift from a values-oriented society of the late 1960's and early 1970's, to a market-oriented society of the late 1970's and 1980's). Also, the facts suggest that people, trained primarily for careers in teaching, continue to be frustrated in their hopes and ambitions. Increasingly, many of these people are forced to re-examine their career goals and decide for the more employable opportunities in business and industry. So called "career enrichment" programs are widely available now on many campuses, helping faculty members to clarify career goals and, among other services, "plan for transitions into alternative careers." New programs, designed to re-train humanists for business careers, have been established at such places as NYU, the University of Virginia, and several other places. Employement services, catering to the disenfranchised - or disillusioned - teacher, as we are all well aware, have done a thriving business on the alternative-career market.

Perhaps this widespread examination of purposes - unquestionably a painful experience for many - is something not without its own rewards. This is simply to suggest that the economic dislocations of the past decade, the transformations of a whole society from what John Nesbitt in MEGATRENDS (1982) calls a labor-intensive industrial society to an emerging "literacy-intensive information society", becomes as much an opportunity for us as it does a liability. Nesbitt describes one kind of opportunity in the future:

> There will be a huge demand for teachers to tutor "students" with jobs in private business. Former teachers with an entrepreneurial bent will find a growing market for educational consulting services in the new information society. (32)

In more immediate terms, this process of forced accomodation between humanists and non-humanists has had, in my opinion, a salutary effect. As the so-called "real world" has become a viable alternative choice for individuals, viewed with a greater degree of tolerance than before, so also have English departments had to re-think many of their basic assumptions about their traditional missions to students and society. For example, they have begun to come to terms with the unpleasant discovery that their image as an elitist and sometimes autocratic community within the humanities group itself has had a cumulative negative and self-defeating effect throughout the larger university - as

well as vis-a-vis the outer community too. Humanists, as a group, have managed, in my opinion, to make themselves unwelcome, oftentimes, in other communities and groups because of an overt and, frequently, palpable disdain for value systems and commitments other than those they claim for themselves. Frequently enough, too, that disdain has been returned in spades by the disdained. To put labels on this, a "gap" has long existed between humanists, technologists, and business-people. That this historical gap might be narrowed, if not altogether closed, and possibly bridged, is the focus of this essay.

I have long felt that C. P. Snow's famous essay on the "two cultures" - science and the world of literary intellectuals - might as easily have been written to describe the similar ignorance and antipathy that has historically existed between business and the humanities. Certainly, his description of the gap between scientists and humanists could, as readily, be applied to the "cultures" of business and the arts:

> Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension - sometimes (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding. They have a curious distorted image of each other. Their attitudes are so different that, even on the level of emotion, they can't find much common ground.

In Snow's analysis, scientists [substitute business people] were regarded by humanists as "shallowly optimistic," unaware of man's real condition; while, on the other hand, scientists [business] regarded humanists as "totally lacking in foresight, peculiarly unconcerned with their brother men, in a deep sense anti-intellectual, [and] anxious to restrict both art and thought to the existential moment." The resulting effects of this gap, Snow concludes, has been to produce a division in our culture which makes us "more obtuse than we need be."

What are some of the reasons for this division and reluctance to bridging the gap? In general, three have usually been suggested: (1) humanists have, traditionally, remained abstracted from the technological imperatives of capitalistic society and have, instead, pursued interests more transcendent in nature; (2) not trained in methodologies which emphasize measurement and quantifiable exactness, humanists and non-humanists neither share a common language nor have much motivation to learn each other's; and (3) while humanists are more oriented towards past events - how "tradition" can inform the present - non-humanists (like scientists, engineers, business-people) are primarily interested in future consequences and results of their work. Whereas the former are, essentially, reflective in their thinking, the latter are inclined to be less reflective, and more interested in information as it affects decision-making and change.

And what are some of the effects of this division and gap? Anyone familiar with the state of humanities programs in universities today, or reasonably current on the literature appearing in such journals as the ADE BULLETIN (Association of Departments of English) senses a mood of crisis and concern. In a recent commentary on the profession, John Gerber makes these sober observations:

> I have been associated with college English for fifty-eight years, and I think I have seldom or never seen college English teachers as a whole less interested in grappling with the fundamental issues of education. I am tempted to say that departments of English as a whole are lying dead in the water. (Gerber, 1983)

In an earlier article, titled "Historical Drift," Gerber had some equally unsettling comments to make. The history of the profession, he argues, "is also in part a history of blunders, missed opportunities, and just plain fatheadedness." "English," he asserts, "is a clutter - and is becoming more of a clutter all the time. It is in a state of becoming, never in a state of being." Diversification is regarded as a sign of vitality rather than as an indication of confusion. Course planning has been primarily for specialized interests rather than for the general needs of students planning to enter professions other than English. (Gerber, 1981) Consequently, as everyone realizes, enrollments in humanities programs have dropped drastically. Only 3% of the 1980 freshman class indicated an interest in majoring in some humanities program (and only .9% in English). Most frequently, those programs which have designed material for students interested in careers other than the academic, and where an "applications" approach to subject matter is taken, have been most popular and successful. (Marshall, 1981).

In English departments, for example, as Walzer has indicated, a dramatic increase in the number of courses offering business writing is evident (in 1971 84% of all such courses were taught in business schools; by 1978 50% were offered through English departments) (Walzer, 1979). Whether this willingness is freely taken, though, or whether it is a forced response to the pressures of declining enrollments is a matter for debate. What is more obvious is that this "movement away from the aristocracy and the values of the court and toward democracy and the values of capitalism" has certainly exacerbated the historical tensions between those who teach writing and those who teach literature.

Teachers of composition have long been aware of their "second-class" status within departments of English. And for teachers of business and technical writing the problem has been even more serious. Typically, they have - until recently - felt ignored and neglected by their literary colleagues. The prevailing view was expressed best by Merrill Whitburn when he wrote recently that "the attitude persists in English departments that our work is at or near the bottom in a hierarchy of

intellectually challenging pursuits. We are seen as dealing with low and worldly matters." (Whitburn, 1977). Fortunately, this attitude seems to be changing, and teachers of professional writing have been benefiting from the renewed emphasis on communications skills for the professions. But writing courses are still taught by graduate students, not senior faculty, and courses such as I teach are still referred to by many faculty as "service courses" with all that that implies. And numerous "debates" are being waged every issue in the journals about the "place of business writing in English departments," and about whether this subject matter is appropriate or not for the liberal arts. (Rivers, 1980). Much of this "justification" literature strikes me as being slightly artful and naive - as well as just a little bit disingenuous. If, as Wayne Booth has recently written, "it seems undeniable that teachers of composition are, increasingly, physically isolated from those who deal with 'higher things,'and that he cannot "remember a time when the invention of enemies was so widespread among us - what might be called the fake polarity industry," then it is only logical to recognize the compounded difficulties teachers of business or technical writing still face in bridging the gap between being merely tolerated and fully accepted. (Booth, 1981).

If this describes something of the lost opportunities for more effective integration between composition and literature - polarities within the humanities itself - then what constitutes the possibilities for "new beginnings"? Without intending to be unduly optimistic (directions are rarely ever clear and, as Wayne Booth notes, we work in a "society undergoing historical processes that nobody fully understands"), I do believe we are now in a propitious period for bridging gaps between business and the humanities. A confluence of events have made dialogue between these "two cultures" more likely than before. This conference, for example, is one such example of that effort, a sponsorship which, I doubt, would have been as feasible a decade or so ago. Let me suggest some of these events, not necessarily in any particular order of importance:

(1) Those whose training and careers have paralleled both social and economic events of the past 10-15 years have become far less ideological in their teaching and more tolerant and even respectful of students' values. Even when those values might seriously conflict with our own, still there is less an inclination to attack or ridicule and more an effort to make that the starting point for change. It is as if, after Vietnam and all the other upheavals of the seventies, we are relishing a quieter time, a return to some kind of rapprochement between the divided faiths and loyalties of an earlier period. Though matters of faculty governance and salary inequities still chip away at morale, there seems to me a general recognition that, as a group, we have suffered less than other workers in Michigan, Ohio, and elsewhere, whose lives have been drastically - and permanently - changed by both Inflation and Recession.

(2) We live in a time of lower expectations. Many of us who were trained in the late sixties and early seventies, whose expectations were modified and re-shaped by events beyond our control to manage, have had to learn the art of effective adaptation. Events have made us question and re-examine most of the myths we learned early on in our schooling and which were reinforced by our readings in graduate school - namely, that Business was full of Babbits and Zero's and Joe Kellers. But the exploitations of graduate school, the resentments the "un-employable" felt towards those who enjoyed the comforts of tenure, assisted in the general re-assessment process. Such efforts of faculty to help re-train their students for "real-world" employement seemed both hypocritical, inadequate and belated. Even now, the annual report on the status of the profession, 1981-1982 indicates "the expected continuing outpouring from the graduate schools of large numbers of new Ph.D.'s relative to available openings." (Academe, 1982). In short, the humanities own short-sighted and self-protecting behaviors in these difficult years have provoked a general reassessment of the "two cultures", one, I believe, which is more favorable to Business than ever before.

(3) Perhaps not since the Sputnik crisis of 1958 has educational concern achieved the levels of publicity it has during 1983. The A NATION AT RISK report was one of several which urges broader and more effective partnerships between business, labor, the professions and education. In a central statement, it called for bridging the gap between narrow vocationalism and an 'education for its own sake' philosophy:

> We know that education has deeper purposes than merely to prepare people for jobs; to define the mission of the schools along narrowly utilitarian lines would be to misperceive the purposes of schooling. But preparation for work is nonetheless a very important aim. And surely education for economic growth is a worthwhile goal a-round which to organize our efforts and to rally the American people in the cause of improving the nations schools.

What is encouraging here is the perception of many that Business is showing a renewed interest in the educational process. It is a support that is motivated by self-interest, of course, but we have learned that there is nothing necessarily wrong with that at all. All across the country, co-operative ventures between business communities and academic institutions are creating a sense of shared purpose that seems encouraging for the future bridging process. The realization that effective coalitions are a necessity for public support and confidence defines this new pragmatism - a pragmatism that is not devoid of an underpinning idealism in the faith of institutions to be revived through democratic self-criticism. (Griffiths, 1982).

In the preceding account, I have largely been describing my own career development. My case is not particularly unusual, I believe, but it may be instructive of what I have been suggesting. I wanted to be an English teacher as early as my junior year in high school, so that I could become a humanist teaching undergraduates. I went to graduate school, got an M.A. degree, grew weary of graduate talk about how little money we had and how tough certain teachers were, left and worked at two different colleges over the next three years. In 1967 I decided I needed a Ph.D. for my professional advancement and returned to graduate school, working off and on as an instructor until I earned my degree in 1975, a not so propitious time for academic employement.

For reasons not entirely clear to me, I didn't look actively for a teaching position but, instead, found a job as an administrator in a Human Service organization with considerable staff and budgetary responsibilities. I worked there for four years until, tired now of political interference and the grind of administrative duties, I found myself yearning again for the satisfactions of the classroom. As events unfolded over the next few years, my academic and non-academic experiences combined to produce a new set of qualifications for teaching technical and professional writing. Raised in an eastern urban setting, I am currently teaching technical communication in a mid-western university College of Agriculture to, primarily, agriculturalists and engineers. In no sense do I feel my work is any less humanistic now than before. Teaching writing is teaching students how to think - I have always been doing that as a teacher! To the extent that I feel I have bridged a gap between my own previously narrower sense of what constituted a humanistic education and my broader and more inclusive views now, I believe I have become a more effective teacher. There is a better integration between my personal commitments and my social commitments. I find myself less at odds with the essential commitments of our society than I did during those years between the mid-sixties and seventies. My purpose as a teacher seems much clearer to me now: to instruct my students as a means of helping them to find their own particular value and role within a society committed both to economic growth and social change. I harbor few illusions about my impact: it will probably be small and, to me, perhaps imperceptible. But I do work out of a confidence that I will have some impact on their careers and that my own healthier notion of how corporate interests and academic interests inter-connect and rely on each other will contribute to their own maturing sense of what is special and unique about this nation.

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THE INNER IDEAL INTERVIEWER AND INTERVIEWEE

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Review of Previous Literature

Much research has been completed on the importance of nonverbal, paraverbal and verbal communications of applicants and recruiters in the employment interview. For example, Morgan and Cogger assert that eye contact is probably the most important nonverbal behavior to establish rapport.[1] Hatfield and Gatewood suggest that a "firm" handshake from both male and female candidates has demonstrated a mild positive impact on the selection decision, while a "sweaty" hand or soft grip from a male has a negative impact.[2] Tschirgi concludes that recruiters are more impressed with perceptual differences and with how well the candidate communicates than with substantive data.[3]

Other research by Watson and Smeltzer concludes that eye contact, facial expressions, appearance, paralinguistic cues, clothing, gesturing and smiling are the most important nonverbal cues in impression formation and decision-making in the employment interview.[4] Carl's research supports the contention that nonverbal communication is the most important code of communication in the employment interview.[5] Washburr and Hakel suggest: "It's not what you say, but how you say it."[6] Similar findings are in a number of other studies published in the of journals of various disciplines.[7]

Dress is also an important factor in forming first impressions. Molloy asserts that eight of ten women dress for failure as 1) they let the fashion industry influence their choice of business clothes; 2) they often still view themselves as sex objects; and 3) they let socioeconomic background influence their choice of clothes. He suggests that for an employment interview, a female should wear a gray or medium range suit such as beige, camel, dark brown, deep maroon, deep rust or black. Females should wear a solid color blouse, wear plain pumps and carry an attache case. Pastel colors should be avoided.[8]

Males also need to follow guides to appropriate dress for an employment interview. The basic wardrobe for success should include a navy suit, a gray suit, or a tweed suit. To make a positive first impression the male applicant should wear a navy suit, a white oxford shirt, black shoes and a belt and a formal tie.[9]

Another nonverbal factor is distance between interviewer and interviewee. Hatfield and Gatewood sugggest that three to five feet is the best distance for the selection interview.[10] Rosegran and McCroskey found that male interviewees with a male interviewer established significantly greater distance than male applicants with female interviewers or female interviewers with either male or female interivewees. No research has focused on seating arrangement during the interview.

Finally, Einhorn concludes that a successful interviewee displays communication behaviors that identify with the potential employer by utilizing supporting arguments, clarifying ideas and being

well-organized. Specifically, the applicant should use active verbs, concrete language, personal experiences, statistics and explanations.[12] Cheatham and McLaughlin's study reveals that effectiveness of responses to questions is a problem for both interviewer and interviewee.[13]

Limited research, however, has been reported on the importance of nonverbal, paraverbal and verbal communications of the interviewer in the employment interview. Rogers and Sincoff concluded that an interviewee's first impressions of a recruiter is a key factor in deciding whether to accept a position with a company.[14] That is, applicants transfer their impressions of the interviewer to the company. Carlson and others determined that interviewers who are disorganized, unparepared, inexperienced, and nonfluent are bad interviewers.[15] Downs concludes:

> The interviewer becomes the symbol for the company, and yet he represents a sample size of only one. Nevertheless, the candidate often places more importance on his estimate of the "representative of the company" than on his judgments based on the company literature.16

In short, interviewers, as well as interviewees, need to develop communication competencies in nonverbal, paraverbal and verbal areas to maximize success during the employment interview.

In addition to the literature attesting to the importance of nonverbal communication in interviewing, many studies have focused on the importance of nonverbal communication in other dyadic communication situtions. Andersen's extensive review of literature indicates that immediacy consists of communication behaviors engaged in when a person 1) maintains closer physical distance, 2) communicates on the same spatial plane, 3) is not in front of or behind the other interactant, 4) touches, 5) uses direct body orientation, 6) is relaxed, 7) uses overall purposeful body movement, 8) engages in positive head nods, 9) uses eye contact, 10) spends time with the other interactant, 11) dresses informally and 12) is vocally expressive.[17*] Other research by Beck and Lambert concluded that eye contact, facial expressions, posture, proximics and voice were important variabales that determine first impressions of teachers.[18]

*For a review of literature covering the immediacy construct see Andersen's dissertation entitled, "The Relationship between Teacher Immediacy and Teaching Effectiveness," West Virginia University, 1978. Mehrabian's definition of the immediacy principle and experimental research studies are of primary importance in developing her definition of immediacy. See, for example, Silent Messages, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971).

The above review of literature is used as background material for the unit on employment interviewing in an interpersonal class. Prior to the interviewing unit students have discussed various intrapersonal and interpersonal communication variables and the role of nonverbal and verbal variables in social-dyadic communication situations. This study

is an outgrowth of the review of literature, class discussion and interactions with professional recruiters. Specifically, the teacher and student are interested in recruiters' perceptions of the communication behaviors of recent graduates during the interviewing process.

The Inner Ideal Study

In this study Andersen's Behavioral Indicants of Immediacy Scale is used to determine recruiter's perceptions of interviewees' nonverbal and paraverbal immediacy behaviors.[19] In addition, a Nonverbal Factor Questionnaire was developed from Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction.[20] The Verbal Questionnaire was based on Einhorn's research.[21] Decoding messages also is an important part of the communication process. Stewart and Cash stress that listening is an invisible skill, that a person cannot see, hear, touch or smell it and that most people are passive listeners.[22] Recruiters were also asked to rate the ideal nonverbal and verbal communication behaviors of the ideal interviewer by rating the Norton and Pettegrew's Attentiveness Scale[23] and Einhorn's Verbal Interviewing Scale.[24] Biological sex, age levels (21-26, 27-35, 36-45 and 45) and educational level of recruiters (high school, some college, A.A., B.A., M.A. and M.A.+ degrees) were used as independent variables.

Biological sex is used to determine if male and female recruiters have different perceptions on dependent measures of male and female applicants in the employment interview and to determine if recruiters have different perceptions of the ideal communication behaviors of interviewers. Likewise, educational level and age level are used to determine differences among members of various groups in rating applicants and ideal interviewers. In short, these variables are used to track differences between and among groups on dependent measures and to determine within group variances on various dependent measures.

Research Questions

1. Are there perceptual differences between biological sex recruiter groups, among age level recruiter groups and among educational level recruiter groups in rating male and female applicants on immediacy behaviors, nonverbal items and verbal behaviors during the employment interview?

2. What are the highest rated immediacy behaviors, nonverbal items, and verbal behaviors in the employment interview?

3. Are there perceptual differences between biological sex recruiter groups, among age level recruiter groups and among educational level recruiter groups in rating male and female applicants' communication behaviors during the employment interview?

4. Are there perceptual differences between biological sex recruiter groups, among age level recruiter groups, and among educational level recruiter groups in rating the importance of attentiveness

behaviors and verbal behaviors of interviewers during the employment interview?

5. What are the highest rated attentiveness behaviors and verbal behaviors of the interviewer during the employment interview?

6. Are there perceptual differences between biological sex recruiter groups, among age level recruiter groups and among educational level recruiter groups in rating communication behaviors of interviewers during the employment interview?

Procedures

Initially, a pilot study was completed in which 115 recruiters rated interviewees on immediacy and verbal behaviors and the importance of nonverbal items. Recruiters were asked to complete the questionnaire based on their experiences with job applicants. They completed the questionnaire after they had interviewed several applicants at one of the Placement Centers at a midwestern university. Factor analyses with oblique rotations were completed on the data to determine the dimensions of communication behaviors of job applicants during the employment interview.

In the main study 250 recruiters were sent the Interviewing Assessment Questionnaire consisting of several different scales. Lists of recruiters were obtained from the Colleges of Agriculture, Forestry, Home Economics, Business Admninistration, Education, and Law placement offices at a midwestern university. Bioloigcal sex of recruiters was used as a stratification variable. The original intent was to use "placement office" as a stratification variable, but because of the wide variance in number of recruiters from the various offices, placement office could not be used as a stratification variable. Each participant was asked to complete the Behavioral Indicants of Immediacy Scale, Interviewing Nonverbal Factor Scale, and Interviewing Verbal Factor Scale. Recruiters also were asked to rate the importance of attentiveness behaviors and verbal behaviors of interviewers during the employment interview. Factor analyses with oblique rotations also were completed to determine dimensions of communication behaviors of interviewers during the employment interview.

Instruments

a. Behavioral Indicants of Immediacy Scale

In 1978 Andersen devleoped the BII.[25] The five-step, Likert-type scale consists of 15 items that focus on teacher immediacy in terms of eye contact, purposeful body movement, gestures, engaging in positive head nods, smiles and vocal expressiveness. Factor analysis of the data producing a structure where all items loaded above .55. Test-retest correlation coefficient analysis produced a .80 relationship. Thus, the scale is considered to be reliable and valid.

b. Interviewing Nonverbal Factor Scale

Items for this instrument were developed from Knapp's book.[26] His book reviews literature focusing on various dimensions of nonverbal communication. In addition, other items were also developed from reviewing articles focusing on interviewing.

c. Interviewing Verbal Scale

The Interviewing Verbal Scale is based on research completed by Einhorn. The scale consists of 12 items. Recruiters rated applicants on these items and also rated the interviewer on these items.[27]

d. Attentiveness Scale

In 1979 Norton and Pettegrew published the results of their development of an attentiveness instrument.[28] They completed a factor analysis of the thirty item test. The results indicated the attentiveness construct is multidimensional consisting of inactivity signals, sensitivities and evaluation.

Statistical Analysis

Chi square analyses were completed to determine differences between biological sex groups, among age groups and among educational level groups in rating applicants on immediacy cues, nonverbal factors and verbal cues. In addition, chi square analyses were completed to determine recruiter's perceptions of the importance of attentiveness cues and verbal cures of recruiters during the employment interivew.

T-tests were completed to determine differences between biological sex groups, age level groups and educational level groups in rating communication dimensions of interviewers and interviewees.*

Results

The mean results based on 158 (113 males and 46 females) completed questionnaires or 63 percent of the total, are reported in Tables 1 through 3. Table 1 reports perceptual differences between male and female recruiters in rating male and female nonverbal behaviors. Respondents rated applicants in terms of their level of agreement from strongly agree through strongly disagree. Composite percentages were determined by adding 1) "strongly agree" and "agree" and 2) "disagree" and "strongly disagree" categories.

The findings indicate that a majority of male and female applicants use appropriate eye contact, are vocally expressive, have an erect posture and appropriate facial expressions.

The results also indicate that female applicants are rated higher on all nonverbal variables by male and female recruiters. Female recruiters also rated male applicants higher than male recruiters. This is especially true in rating the smile and posture items.

*Prior to the study, the researchers planned to complete multiple discriminant analyses. This statistical technique maximizes differences between groups of variables included as predictors. However, because of the extremely wide variances in cell sizes, this multivariate technique was not completed. That is, for the age variable there were 5 recruiters in the "21-26" group, 71 recruiters in the "27-35" groups, 42 recruiters in "36-45" group, and 15 recruiters in the "46+" group. In addition, 80 percent fo the recruiters had either a B.A. or M.A. degree.

Similar percentages occurred for age level groups and educational level groups in rating immediacy cues. Thus, these percentages do not appear in table form.

Table 2 reports the nonverbal factors. Judges were asked to assess the level of importance from "very important" to "very unimportant" for the various factors. Percentages were determined by adding 1) "very important and important" and adding 2) "unimportant" and "very unimportant." Results indicate that overall appearance and smelling clean are the two most important variables. In addition, a majority of judges contended that body shape, clothes, loudness of voice, rate of speech, and clean nails are important.

Many differences occurred in various rating. For example, 80 percent of female judges indicated that female applicant height was important, whereas only 16 percent of male judges felt it was important. A substantially higher percentage of both male and female judges felt that selection of clothes was more important for female than male applicants. Both groups of judges agree that jewelry and accents are unimportant nonverbal factors.

Significant differences occurred between male and female recruiters' perceptions in rating "height" ($p < .05$) and "firm handshake" ($p < .05$). Specifically, female judges indicate that height is more important for females and indicate that a firm handshake is more important for male applicants than male judges. No significant differences occurred for age groups and educational groups on dependent measures. Significant differences did occur for educational level groups in rating "height," "smell clean" and "clean nails." In all cases B.A. and M.A. level groups rated the importance higher than the high school group.

The results of verbal behaviors are reported in Table 3. Participants were also asked to indicate their level of agreement in rating applicants on verbal variables. Findings indicate that both male and female judges rated male and female applicants highest on personal experiences, explanations, organization, concrete language, and active verbs. Both groups also agree that applicants use statistics, testimony and technical jargon less frequently than other verbal cues. No significant differences occurred between biological sex groups in rating verbal cues.

Overall Rankings and Summaries

The overall rankings, reported in Table 4, indicate that eye contact and vocally expressive are the most important immediacy variables; overall appearance, smelling clean and a firm handshake are the most important nonverbal factors and explanations, personal experiences and organization are the most important verbal factors.

In Table 5 a summary of the items that loaded on each dimension is presented. The results indicated that nonverbal cues, space,

appearance, features and verbal profiles are the communication behavior dimensions. An examination of the data indicates that nonverbal cues, appearance and verbal profile composite means are above 4.00 on a 5.00 scale. The T-test results, reported in Table 6, indicate that female recruiters rated the appearance and verbal dimensions higher than male recruiters for both male and female applicants. No signficant differences occurred between B.A. and M.A. groups and between "27-35" and "36-45" groups in rating communication behavior dimensions.

Table 7 presents the level of importance and significant chi square results for each item on the Attentiveness scale. The results indicate that the attentiveness cues that were rated the highest are careful listener, alert communicator, attentive communicator, nodding head and smiling. Although there were some differences between biological sex groups, much commonality exists between groups in rating the items. Overall, a greater percentage of female recruiters rated most of the items higher than male recruiters. For example, 61 percent of male recruiters and 74 percent of female recruiters perceived that the interviewer should smile during the interview. In addition, 27 percent of males perceived that the ideal interviewer should paraphrase what the interviewee says, whereas 63 percent of females perceived that the interviewer should paraphrase. Significant differences occurred between groups in rating smiling, paraphrasing and reading an applicant like a book. Differences among age level groups and educatinal groups are not reported as they approximate the biological sex results.

Table 8 presents the level of importance and significant chi square results between groups for each item on the verbal scale. The findings revealed that interviewers perceived that organization, concrete language, explanation, good transitions and active verbs are the most important cues for the ideal interviewer. Male and female recruiters also have similar perceptions in rating verbal items. That is over 90 percent of both groups indicated that the ideal interviewer should use concrete language, use explantions and should be well-organized. For these items the grand mean was 4.5 or above on a 5-point scale. Specifically, 88 percent of female respondents and 78 percent of male respondents felt interviewers should use active verbs. In addition, 95 percent of females and 84 percent of males felt that good transitions are important during the employment interview. Both groups, however, rated testimony, technical jargon and transitions such as "OK," "and," "but," and "so" as unimportant for the interviewer.

In Table 9 a summary of the three communication behavior factors for interviewers is presented. The T-test results, reported in Table 10, indicate that females rated all factors (p. .05) higher than male recruiters.

Discussion

An interpretation of the results of this study indicate that a majority of male and female applicants appear to be performing in an appropriate manner in the employment interview situation. That is, both groups evaluated by both male and female recruiters indicate that a majority of students use good eye contact, are vocally expressive and

use appropriate facial expressions. Judges rated overall appearance, smelling clean, appropriate clothing and a firm handshake as important nonverbal factors in impression formation. This has been confirmed in previous research. In addition, students are using appropriate verbal cues in the interviewing situation.

These results, however, should be viewed with caution as much variance occurs in rating the nonverbal variables, nonverbal factors and verbal variables. For example, 61 percent of male recruiters agree that males use appropriate facial expression, while 78 percent of female recruiters indicate that males use appropriate facial expressions. In addition, to the differences between male and female perceptions of the utilization of facial expressions, there is a substantial percentage of students who do not use appropriate facial expressions. Other results show that 75 percent of applicants are organized, 60 percent use good transitions and 70 percent use active verbs. These findings suggest that a significant percentage of students do not utilize appropriate verbal behaviors in the employment interview situation.

In addition, an examination of other demographic variables indicates that applicants smile less frequently with older interviewers, and use fewer active verbs with younger recruiters. The percentages reported in this study, might be discipline bound. As Recruiters who interview in the College of Education, for example, might rate applicants significantly higher than recruiters who interview in the College of Agriculture. Because the number of recruiters varied from one college to another and because of the limited composite sample, this study can not determine if students from some colleges are better prepared for the employment interview than students from other colleges. Future research should focus on this area.

An interpretation of the results that focuses on interviewers communication behaviors indicates that female recruiters rated items as well as dimensions higher than male recruiters. These findings support previous research conducted by McDowell, McDowell and Hyerdahl.[30] In this study female students indicated they utilize more nonverbal and verbal cues in interacting with their teachers than male students. The results suggest that females perceive that the interviewer should use a variety of nonverbal, listening and verbal behaviors in the employment interview.

Overall, the attentiveness items focusing on listening were rated higher than items on other dimensions. Similar findings occurred in a study by DiSalvo, Larsen and Seiler.[31] They concluded that listening is the most important communication skill in the professional's world of work. Stewart and Cash stress that listening is an invisible skill, that a person cannot see, hear, touch or smell it and that most people are passive listeners.[32] As a result, in interviewing situations, the interviewer or interviewee must be attentive toward each other to understand the various nonverbal, paraverbal and verbal messages.

According to Mehrabian in informal types of communication, 7 percent of the total message is communicated by words or <u>what is said</u>, 38 percent by paralinguistic cues of <u>how it was said</u>, and 55 percent

from nonverbal cues, how a person looked while saying it, although these percentages might vary in an interview situation, nonverbal and paraverbal messages are of major importance for both the interviewer and interviewee.[33] Watson and Smeltzer also concluded that nonverbal cues such as appearance, eye contact, facial expressions and punctuality are the most influential during personnel selection.[34] These variables are also very important for the interviewer.

Future research should focus on how well interviewers perform during an interview. This could be done by having job applicants rate employment interviewers. Through this process interviewers would be provided with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, male and female applicants' perceptions of male and female interviewers could be made to determine if applicants of the same sex as the interviewer rate them differently than applicants of the opposite sex.

The results of this study add substance and credibility to the interviewing unit in the basic interpersonal course. Many students who are enrolled in the course are juniors or seniors. Thus, the importance of the employment interviewing unit is timely and helps students to prepare for their "real" world interviewing. At the beginning of the unit students are gaiven a copy of the Interviewing Assessment Questionnaire as well as a summary of the data. The major focus of the discussion contains the information in Tables 4, 5, and 9. These tables summarize the recruiters' perceptions of immediacy behvaiors and verbal behaviors of applicants during employment interviews and ideal communication behaviors of interviewers.

The results of this study have also led to the development of three interview videotapes to show students differences between effective and ineffective interviewing of both interviewers and interviewees. Students evaluate participants using the Interviewing Assessment Questionnaire. In addition, students participate in a role playing interview exercise. Specifically, students develop a job description, letter of application and resume. They exchange these materials with students from the same discipline, develop interview guides, a series of questions and interview each other. The interviews are videotaped and students use the questionnaire items to evalute partners and themselves as interviewers and interviewees. Overall, the results of this study add more impact to the interviewing unit in the basic interpersonal course.

In summary, the results of the study indicate the follcwing:

1. A majority of male and female recruiters agree that male and female students utilize appropriate eye contact, are vocally expressive and use appropriate facial expressions. Male applicants appear more apprehensive as they smile less and use fewer hand gestures than female applicants.

2. A majority of male and female recruiters indicate that overall appearance, smelling clean, firm handshake, appropriate clothng, loudness and rate of the voice, and clean nails are important nonverbal factors in impression formation in the employment interview. A greater percentage of male recruiters feel that body shape is important for

female applicants and a firm handshake is more important for male applicants than female applicants. Female recruiters feel that height and rate of speech are more important for female applicants than male judges.

3. A majority of male and female recruiters think both male and female applicants use active verbs, concrete language, personal experiences, and explanation.

4. Younger male interviewers prefer to sit at a personal distance, while older interviewers prefer to sit at a social distance.

5. Higher educated recruiters and female recruiters rated applicants higher on appearance than less educated and male recruiters.

6. Both male and female recruiters rated careful listening, alert communicator, attentive communicator, nodding head and smiling higher than other attentiveness cues.

7. The verbal items that are rated the highest by both groups are: organization, concrete language, explanation, good transitions, and active verbs.

8. Females recruiters rated nonverbal cues, listening cues and verbal cues higher than male interviewers.

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TABLE 1

Percentage Ratings of Male and Female Recruiters on Nonverbal Behaviors

Items	Sex of Applicant	Male Judges		X^2	Female Judges		X^2
		Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree	
Eye Contact	M	79	11		89	7	17
	F	89	4		91	5	13
Hand Gestures	M	47	24		60	19	84
	F	46	29		59	16	15
Facial Expressions	M	61	15		78	8	46
	F	63	18		88	2	56
Smile	M	28	40		50	28	02
	F	43	36		66	18	51
Vocally Expressive	M	74	6		79	7	72
	F	77	9		90	5	60
Posture	M	65	12		85	6	64
	F	70	14		84	2	78

TABLE 2

Percentage Rating of Male and Female Recruiters on Nonverbal Factors

Items	Sex of Applicant	Male Judges		Female Judges		
		I	U	I	U	X^2
Body Shape	M	61	29	60	29	.96
	F	51	44	51	42	.89
Height	M	14	72	12	73	.48
	F	16	80	80	11	.001
Clothes	M	51	33	53	34	.92
	F	65	25	64	22	.83
Appearance	M	94	5	92	7	.94
	F	94	2	93	2	.98
Smells Clean	M	84	6	84	6	
	F	85	4	87	2	.92
Firm Handshake	M	71	12	55	25	.05
	F	77	11	61	13	.10
Loudness of Voice	M	59	12	59	13	.98
	F	62	20	69	15	.47
Rate	M	57	16	55	16	.96
	F	63	14	63	14	
Pitch	M	41	25	37	27	.82
	F	49	24	49	22	.94
Jewelry	M	17	61	17	65	.96
	F	27	56	23	60	.90
Facial Hair	M	28	55	31	55	.93
	F	23	66	24	67	.97
Clean Nails	M	72	16	73	17	.98
	F	77	9	79	7	.91
Accents	M	21	54	22	54	.96
	F	22	64	22	64	

TABLE 3

Percentage Rating of Male and Female Recruiters on Verbal Variables

Items	Sex of Applicant	Male Judges A	Male Judges D	Female Judges A	Female Judges D	X^2
Personal Experience	M	88	8	82	9	.68
	F	91	5	91	2	.29
Explanation	M	76	7	79	6	.66
	F	95	2	95	5	.12
Comparisons	M	52	19	54	21	.49
	F	72	12	70	14	.63
Statistics	M	29	42	25	43	.25
	F	51	35	40	40	.60
Testimony	M	28	41	31	36	.91
	F	33	38	31	40	.85
Organized	M	74	11	78	10	.81
	F	72	9	84	5	.90
Concrete Language	M	71	12	67	13	.10
	F	84	2	79	5	.14
Technical Jargon	M	39	44	30	47	.25
	F	65	19	42	33	.37
Active Verbs	M	72	3	67	7	.49
	F	77	5	72	5	.47
Good Transitions	M	59	17	63	17	.47
	F	47	17	69	14	.37

TABLE 4

Rankings of Immediacy Variables, Nonverbal Factors and Verbal Cues: Perceptions of Recruiters

Immediacy variables	Nonverbal Factors	Verbal Factors
1. eye contact	1. explanations	1. overall appearance
2. vocally expressive	2. personal experiences	2. smells clean
3. erect posture	3. organization	3. firm handshake
4. facial expressions	4. concrete language	4. vocalized pauses
5. hand gestures	5. active verbs	5. loudness of voice
6. smiling	6. good transitions	6. rate of voice
	7. comparisons	7. conservative clothing
	8. technical jargon	8. body shape
	9. statistics	9. clean nails
	10. testimony	10. hair length
		11. pitch of voice
		12. speech defects

TABLE 5

Summary Table of Applicants' Communication Behaviors

Factor	Items
Nonverbal Cues	Eye contact
	Hand Gestures
	Facial Expressions
	Erect Posture
Space	Distance
	Seating Arrangement
Appearance	Body Shape
	Conservative Clothes
	Overall Appearance
	Firm Handshake
Features	Hair Color
	Scars
Verbal Profile	Comparison
	Organization
	Concrete Language
	Active Verbs
	Good Transitions

Table 6

T-Test Perceptions of Recruiter Groups on Communication Variables of Job Applicants

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Male T	Female T
Sex	Nonverbal cues	1.21	.030
	Verbal Profile	5.477**	5.910**
	Appearance	2.155*	4.060**
	Features	.108	.056
	Space	.504	1.648

*Significant at .05 level
**Significant at .01 level

TABLE 7

Percentage Ratings of Male and Female Recruiters on Attentiveness Variables

Items	Male Judge I	Male Judge U	Female Judge I	Female Judge U	X^2
Smiling	61	15	74	4	.05
Nodding head	66	17	64	14	.94
Saying "I see" etc.	42	27	48	26	.82
Leaning toward	49	36	46	32	.84
Knowing feelings of applicants	51	19	59	14	.72
Reading between the lines	53	29	52	34	.76
Paraphrasing	27	46	63	19	.001
Reading the applicant like a book	26	38	41	32	.009
Attentive communicator	71	3	85	1	.78
Alert communicator	94	0	91	2	.92
Careful listener	89	4	93	1	.89
Listen carefully	86	3	87	2	.91

Table 8

Percentage Ratings of Male and Female Recruiters on Verbal Variables

Items	Male Judge I	Male Judge U	Female Judge I	Female Judge U	X^2
Personal Experience	76	8	78	5	.61
Explanation	92	4	96	1	.58
Comparisons	71	13	74	16	.49
Statistics	67	19	73	11	.17
Testimony	51	28	56	23	.64
Organized	97	0	98	0	.88
Concrete language	96	2	90	9	.27
Technical jargon	44	29	49	21	.26
'Ok," "huh"	32	48	27	54	.41
"an," "but," "so"	10	84	14	72	.62
"I," "We"	86	9	82	13	.64
Active verbs	78	11	88	0	.04
Good transitions	84	6	95	0	.25

Table 9

Summary Table of Ideal Interviewing Factors

Factors	Items
Nonverbal Profile	Frequently smiling
	Nodding my head
	Know exact feelings of applicants
	Read between the lines
Listening Profile	Be a careful listener
	Attentive communicator
	Alert communicator
	Listen carefully
	Paraphrasing
Verbal Profile	Personal experiences
	Explanations
	Comparisons
	Statistics
	Organized
	Concrete language
	Active verbs
	Good transitions

Table 10

T-Tests Perceptions of Recruiter Groups
on Communication Variables of Interviewers

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	T
Sex	Nonverbal	4.618*
	Listening	2.965
	Verbal	2.617

*Significant at .01 level

Computers in the Ivory Tower

ONE APPROACH TO WORD PROCESSING IN BUSINESS WRITING CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

Although computer-assisted instruction has received a lot of attention in writing courses, little has been done to prepare our students to use the built-in functions of word processors to compose and revise the prose they will write in their future jobs. After completing the three units on word processing in my business writing courses, my students responded overwhelmingly that the computer had helped to change their perception of the writing process and had helped them improve their prose.

Although in the last few years a lot of attention has been given to increasingly sophisticated computer programs designed to help students in composition classes improve in invention, grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, little has been done to prepare our students to use the built-in functions of the word processors they will have access to as they write in their future jobs. In her survey of computer-assisted instruction, Helen Schwartz notes that Wang's Index cites over 120 computer programs for teaching writing and literature, but how many of our students will have access to programs such as these after they leave school?[1] Very few, I believe, in the near future. Furthermore, most of these programs are designed to instruct and test through drill and practice, simulations, and tutorials. If our students have learned from these the basics of effective writing, they are still going to need training in using the word processor to help them apply the principles they have learned.

As all of us who have experience writing on word processors know, computers can assist us, not only in editing surface features, but also in composing and revising. However, although 75% of my 120 senior-level business communication students had previously used the computer in some way and 10% had actually used word processors for typing letters and papers, 100% responded that they had not been aware that the computer's editing functions could help them to compose, revise, or edit their prose. After the three units I incorporated into my courses, however, 96% of my students responded that the computer had helped to change their perception of the writing process and had helped them to improve their prose.

From their comments on the questionnaire they filled out after the units, I have concluded that the instruction encouraged audience accommodation by separating the students' perception of their prose from their perception of themselves, reinforced the need for constant assessment and revision of their prose, and allowed them to attempt

many different ways to reorganize and rephrase.

The three units I designed build on each other to become increasingly difficult. The first simply teaches the basics of using our VAX system and EDT editor; the second offers steps for analyzing and revising style in most business prose; and the third offers steps for composing, analyzing, and revising negative correspondence. The procedures can be used on any computer or word processor that has the basic editing functions--insert, delete, replace, search, substitute, and move. In the rest of this paper, I will describe what I do in my courses and discuss my findings.

PROCEDURES

Unit 1

The first unit in my course introduces the students to the computer system. Although most of my students have previously used the school's VAX computer, for many of the students this was a very limited experience. They were handed a package program and taught to plug in their data for computer analysis. They really know little of the file and editing systems, which are the heart of word processing. Therefore, we meet in a classroom equipped with a terminal for each student and go through the steps for logging on, entering text, naming files, printing files, and logging off. They have as an assignment for the next class period to enter 10 lines of new text into a file and to bring the printout to class as proof.

The next class period, I introduce the editing functions: 1) the letter manipulation commands INSERT, DELETE, and REPLACE used to correct errors or rephrase; 2) the line manipulation commands INSERT, DELETE, and REPLACE used to reorganize and plan; and 3) the FIND and SUBSTITUTE commands, the most useful for analyzing prose. Again I give my students a brief assignment to show me that they have practiced using these functions. They must feel comfortable with the system before they begin to compose and revise.

Unit 2

While my students are practicing the basic functions as out-of-class assignments, we begin to discuss good business style in the classroom. My style discussions and demonstrations differ little from those found in the early chapters of most business writing texts, but I place more emphasis on style than some of my colleagues may because of the large role that style plays in audience accommodation, organization, and content clarity. Thus, I designed the second computer unit to reinforce the principles of style and to offer the students a process to use when examining and improving their prose style.

After we have spent several days examining prose in the classroom, we go back to the computer. I talk them through the assignment sheet given in Figure 1. I give them a vague sentence such as

"The implementation of the new program is to begin today."

and ask them to follow my procedures. The first step is to locate

Figure 1

Word Processing Unit on Style

I have put in the class directory a file called CLASS:STYLE.DAT;1, which contains the paragraphs you should rewrite for your next assignment. The paragraphs are full of the abstract "officialese" and redundancies we have been discussing in class. Follow the steps listed below to locate sections that need to be rewritten and make the changes. Your final version should be as clear and active as possible. Be careful not to leave out any information, however. Start early in case the system goes down the night before the assignment is due.

1. Use the "TYPE ALL" command to search for all verbs "to be," passive voice verbs, and the seven deadly verbs your text discussed. Replace them with active verbs. Remember that verbs "to be" are ok as tense markers.

2. Use the "TYPE ALL" command to locate all "official" polysyllabic words: ion, ent, ence, ance, ize, izing. Simplify those that you find.

3. Use the "TYPE ALL" command to locate prepositional phrases: of, in, to, for, with, etc. Decide whether the phrase is necessary or wordy and redundant.

4. Use "TYPE ALL" to locate compound phrases or clauses: and, or, nor, but, yet, so. Decide whether part of it should be subordinated.

5. Skim through the text checking for average sentence length. Do most sentences contain roughly 18-22 words? Should any be shortened for emphasis?

6. Skim through the text looking for problems in organization. Use the "MOVE" command to test for order. Try adding some transitional words or phrases from the list in the text.

7. Read through the paragraphs several more times. Clarify or simplify anything that still seems awkward or difficult to you.

8. Now proofread what you have written for spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors. You can use the "TYPE ALL" command to check for some errors you know that you are likely to make. "TYPE ALL 'ing'" would, for example, list all sentences with participles in them so that you could check to see that they don't dangle.

9. Put your files through the RUNOFF program to format them.

abstract and passive verbs, so they will find the verb "is." They know from our discussions that they would have a better sentence if they found the real action in the sentence. Thus, they find "begin," delete "is to," and add an "s" to "begin," leaving them with

"The implementation of the new program begins today."

The second step in my revision series asks them to locate "official" polysyllabic nouns, signaled by suffixes like "-ion" and "ize." The computer thus shows that their sentence also contains "implementation"; from our discussions, they know that they want to find a more common synonym for this word. It becomes obvious to most of them that "new program begins" already implies "implementation" and they simply delete everything before this. Others, however, argue that the real intent of the sentence is to stress the act of starting the program and wish to use "new program" as the direct object. They quickly delete "begin" and substitute "We put into effect" for "The implementation of."

These discussions, then, make clear to them the shades of difference that simple stylistic revisions make in meaning; the hardware, however, makes clear to them how easy it is to try these revisions again and again. When we do these exercises on the board in the classroom, the residue of the discarded sentences clutters the board, and the students look blankly at the mess scrawled across the board. But on their screens, they can keep a copy of the original line if they wish and at the same time see each version of the sentence as they rewrite it. Each version has a line to itself and thus an existence of its own. As a result of this exercise, they begin to see writing as word and structural choices, and style is no longer some subjective idea used by English instructors to justify a "C" on a paper. The students have also performed these operations on sentences successfully and have the confidence to try revising on their own.

These first examples are only exercises designed to start them off. Although it would not be worthwhile to ask a computer to locate passive verbs, polysyllabic nouns, or prepositional phrases found in a single sentence, these searches become feasible on longer pieces of prose. I put into the file system a copy of a student paper, written the first day of class for evaluative purposes, which is typical of what most of their papers looked like--wordy, abstract, vague, and unfocused, with jargon thrown in to dress it up for English class. We then read through the paper and decide that it is not very effective. Next I have them ask to locate the verbs "to be"; they are all surprised to see that almost every sentence is either a verb "to be" or a passive voice verb. The search for polysyllabic nouns and prepositional phrases accounts for most of the remaining prose. They see immediately the correlation between poor style and ineffective prose and they see how easy it is to test for these things.

Next we move to sentence structure and locate coordinating conjuctions and subordinating conjunctive adverbs. The counts are of course

very high for the former and very low for the latter. We then pick a coordinate sentence or two to revise, deciding on the real relationship between the two clauses and replacing the coordinator with the appropriate subordinator. Next we skim through checking on average sentence length. Discussion follows on places to combine clauses and places to shorten for emphasis.

We consider organization next. I ask them to reverse the order of the opening and closing paragraphs, the middle and preceding paragraphs, and so on, noting each time the difference that results in the message conveyed. Again, they are surprised at the difference that a little reorganizing can produce. They see the effect more dramatically when the order of the prose has actually been reversed. Furthermore, they now know for certain what organization means, and they are more likely to do some reorganizing when it can be done so quickly and completely on the machine.

Finally, I ask them to review their prose several times to check as they normally would for anything that seems inappropriate or ineffective. I stress that this is not a fail-safe system, that they might locate and eliminate all verbs "to be," for example, and still have a poor document. This series of steps is meant as guidelines for revising their prose and they know that there are indeed times when it is appropriate to violate these rules.

With these instructions in mind, the students are given their major style assignment. I put a copy of a lengthy, poorly written memo into their files and they follow my procedures to revise it completely. They may also use the word processor for the two assignments which intervene between this and the third required computer assignment, and many students choose to do so.

Unit 3

The third unit gives students a set of instructions for writing negative correspondence at the computer terminal. It, too, combines the strategies recommended in business writing texts for negative messages and those drawn from research on the writing process. After mapping out their goals, analyzing their audience, and jotting down the details, the students are asked to compose their rough drafts on the terminal. Then they assess their prose and revise by following the directions given in Figure 2. They again search for categories of words, but I also stress the importance of the later steps, which ask them to examine in isolation the opening paragraph, the decision statement, and the closing. This reinforces the importance of these sections and increases the students' ability to concentrate on and thus evaluate them.

CONCLUSIONS

Since computer instruction is relatively new in writing courses, I believe that we need to assess its value carefully. I had many reservations before I began these units, among them the fear that the machinery would actually distract my students from writing as well as they were able. Therefore, in addition to comparing their

Figure 2

Word Processing Unit on Negative Letters

Use the word processor to compose the refusal letter you have been assigned in class. Begin by defining your goals in writing to this person clearly. Then analyze your audience completely. What is important to this person? How will he or she react to this news? Review the details and decide which to mention in the letter. Plan your overall organization, and then start drafting. After you have gotten an initial draft into the file, evaluate and revise it by following the steps listed below.

1. Use the "TYPE ALL" command to locate any of the following words in the text. Rewrite the phrase or clause to eliminate any that you find.

   A. negatives: no, not, never, n't B. assumers: sure, trust

   C. damage: upset, unhappy, mistake, error, problem, damage, wrong, dissatisfied, incident

   D. official: justified, must, policy, grant, necessity, against, warranty, guarantee, accept, responsible

   E. painful: apologize, forgive, sorry, unfortunately, afraid, concerned

2. Use the "TYPE ALL" command to search for I-centered subjects: I, me, mine, we, us, our. Change any that project an official tone.

3. Use the "TYPE ALL" command to search for passive or passive voice verbs. Keep them if they help to deemphasize the decision; otherwise, replace them with active verbs.

4. Use the "TYPE ALL" command to locate complex sentences: although, if, since, when, because, after, where, as, until, who, which, that. Do they help to deemphasize the "no"? Consider adding some more.

5. Use the "TYPE ALL" command to locate polysyllabic nouns: ion, ent, ence, ance, ize, izing. Simplify any that you find.

6. Print the opening paragraph. Does it bring up positive or neutral points?

7. Print the decision statement. Does it follow the explanation? Is it in an unemphatic position; is it stated indirectly; is it yoked to a positive benefit?

8. Print the closing paragraph. Does it offer a counter proposal or action? Does it apologize, invite questions, or shift to heavy resale?

9. Print the letter several more times checking for clarity, tone, coherence, and correctness as usual.

prose to that of previous students, I asked them to complete a questionnaire describing their experience and its value to them. Although they did report logistical problems, they felt, on the whole, that the experience was very beneficial, and I believe that their prose improved as a result.

Problems

The problems stemmed, for the most part, from general inexperience with computer systems and to a lesser extent from the hardware itself. Students who have had no typing experience find using the terminals frustrating; they not only spend a great deal of time in just entering their texts, but also receive repeated error messages from the machine because of mistyped commands. Students are unaccustomed to dealing with such a literal machine that won't forgive a forgotten period in a command. However, even those who reported frustration felt the experience was worthwhile.

Secondly, there is the problem of logistics. Although several schools now require students to purchase word processors, this certainly is not standard practice. We all have to share a limited number of machines on very heavily used and even at times abused systems. The students do complain about long waits for a machine, system failures, and distracting noise. Because we have to use the mainframe VAX system with its central printers, my students also had complaints about the print quality. Although these problems made it more difficult for them to complete the assignments, they did not prevent my students from gaining the experience in word processing that they need.

Benefits

Almost all of my students believed that they actually had better concentration at the terminal. The technology forced them to do much more prethought. Instead of jotting down the first thing that came to mind, they found themselves mapping out their strategy first and then entering phrases. When asked to describe their steps when writing their negative letter, 60% admitted that they had written a rough draft by hand before they got on the terminal. Once there, however, they virtually threw the original out. They found through the analysis of their prose that the computer afforded them that they were able to revise substantially. The lack of clutter on the screen made it easier to concentrate on what they had written, and displaying the prose systematically and in isolation helped them to perceive the difference between what was in their minds and what was actually recorded. This process in effect divorced them from their writing, allowing them to consider the effects of their words from the reader's point of view. They also thought that they wrote in a more organized manner; they were better able to interweave the steps of thinking, phrasing, and revising more recursively.

All of my students reported improvement in their editing steps. The word processor, they said, saved them time during the minor steps so that they could give more attention to the more difficult tasks. Those who had tried a draft at home first were surprised to see the number of weak constructions they had left in their drafts when they

had the computer locate their verbs. They felt that they revised more frequently as they wrote instead of just once at the end because they had begun to look at the actual words instead of how the paragraph sounded as a whole. They liked the ability to substitute freely and evaluate the many combinations that came up.

Although I originally wanted all of my students to follow all of these steps in sequence, many admitted that they modified the directions to suit their needs. They felt that for short pieces the time spent locating every feature I listed could be better spent, but that for longer pieces the complete search was worthwhile. For the shorter pieces, they would instead check for those features that they were most inclined to overuse or misuse. Some, in fact, added steps of their own, such as locating all third-person pronouns to check for agreement. My students had, thus, seen how to make the functions available work to their benefit.

Of the 122 students that I surveyed, 86% answered that the units should definitely stay in the course, 10% were not sure because of the logistical problems, and only 4% felt that they should be omitted from the course. Although I cannot attribute all of the improvement in their writing to the word processing units, I can conclude that the units reinforced the ideas that writing is a recursive process and that writing is a matter of choosing from the patterns and words available. In addition, they have learned procedures which will help them to make these choices more easily on any word processing system that they have available.

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WRITE TO THE TOP: USING COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION TO TEACH BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Although computer-assisted-instruction programs have not been widely used to teach college-level writing classes, CAI programs are now being developed that will change that. Write to the Top, one of the programs currently being developed, promises to change the way in which business communication is taught. Using Write to the Top or similar CAI materials will reduce the number of teacher-graded papers and enable an instructor to teach more students. CAI materials will also result in greater consistency of evaluation across students, classes, and instructors.

Computer assisted instruction (CAI) has not been used to any great extent at the college level for a number of reasons. First, the microcomputers which facilitate computer access have only recently been widely available; second, most CAI materials have been simple drill and practice exercises not fully suitable for use at the college level; and third, few college instructors (other than those teaching computer science courses) had either the desire or the required computer expertise to design or use CAI materials.

The increasing availability of inexpensive microcomputers and the successful application of CAI in elementary education has focused new attention on the development of CAI materials appropriate for college-age students. Most major publishers of college textbooks are now working to develop and market instructional software in a variety of courses. Business communication is no exception, though designing sophisticated CAI materials for a business communication course presents several difficult problems. For this reason, most business communication software currently available has limited application.

This paper discusses the current state of college-level CAI programs, programs currently being developed for business communication courses, and the impact new CAI programs will have on college-level education.

Current CAI Materials

Drill and practice programs for grammar and punctuation rules are available and are being used as supplements in business communication

classes, especially for students who need remedial work in those areas. These programs are virtually all designed around a quiz format, allowing the user to select the correct answer from a number of possibilities. Several publishers have recently released ancillary quiz and test materials of this variety, though it is not always clear whether the students are to use the software to take the quizzes or the instructor is to use the software to produce the quizzes for students to take in a more traditional way.

More sophisticated diagnostic programs are also available for use in business to help with the production of letters and reports. Bell Labs and others have developed fairly successful programs to check for certain aspects of syntax and grammar, though due to the complexities of grammar such programs usually require the power of a mainframe computer. Although these programs have been used as supplements in some business communication courses, they are generally impractical because access to university mainframes is often difficult to obtain and because the programs have not been developed to diagnose problems specific to business communication.

In addition, neither the drill, practice, and tutorial approach nor the complex diagnostic programs is fully suitable for college-level instruction, either for writing in general or for business communication in particular. While drill, practice, and tutorials have proven effective for teaching simple concepts, they have been unsuccessful at teaching the more complex concepts used in college-level classes (Edwards, 1975). College students quickly become bored with repetitious drills over course content. An additional problem concerns the lack of transfer from practice in recognizing errors to the application of specific writing skills. Students are often able to identify a particular error on a quiz and still make that mistake in their own writing.

For those students who have access to them, the diagnostic programs provide a more realistic evaluation of certain common writing difficulties. While the diagnostic programs are capable of analyzing writing samples, however, they do not contain instructional components designed to teach writers how to avoid errors in the future. Such programs also present inexperienced writers with choices they may be unprepared to make. For example, a user of a diagnostic program might be told that he or she has used too much internal punctuation, but the computer program will not be able to help the writer decide <u>which</u> internal punctuation to retain and which to eliminate.

The Microcomputer Revolution

Entertainment and business application programs for microcomputers demonstrate their versatility and potential. The wide variety of entertainment games available for microcomputers suggests that computers, especially the increasingly popular microcomputers, are capable of providing the kind of instruction necessary to make CAI successful in college-level writing programs. Entertainment programs are available in two types: games (arcade-style action, with high-resolution graphics) and simulations (including both situational simulations and adventure

games). The simulations have proved especially popular with adolescent and college-age computer users.

Microcomputers are increasingly used in business for word processing, data-base management, financial spread-sheet applications, records management, forecasting, and production management. Apple, IBM, Radio Shack, and other manufacturers sell hundreds of thousands of "personal" computers capable of these serious applications each year. And each year, new applications are discovered and developed.

In part to meet the demand for experienced users of microcomputers, many colleges and universities have installed microcomputer labs for student and faculty use. Only the absence of appropriate college-level CAI materials is slowing the use of CAI in a wide variety of college courses. These materials are currently being developed, and over the next few years traditional methods of instruction will be replaced by CAI because of its advantages over traditional instructional methods.

CAI will soon become the primary educational delivery system for two principal reasons: first, it is less expensive than traditional methods; and second, it promises to be more effective than traditional methods.

Well developed CAI materials will enable class sizes to double with no real increase in demands placed on the instructor. Students working with CAI materials will require fewer instructor-contact hours; the computer will administer and evaluate quizzes, exams, and other test materials; and the computer will maintain individual and class records. These facts will not be lost on educational administrators: computers cost less than people.

A well developed CAI package should also prove more effective than traditional methods of instruction. A computer program is absolutely consistent from student to student and from class to class. It can recognize and provide special help for individual differences while insisting on the achievement of a set standard of performance. Computers do not tire, get bored, or give higher or lower grades because of a student's appearance. These factors are especially important in courses (such as business communication) requiring subjective evaluations of student work.

Using CAI to Teach Business Communication

Several publishers have authors working to develop CAI materials of varying levels of sophistication for use in business communication courses. These materials will greatly alter the way in which business communication is taught. As the developers of a program employing many of the strategies that make the adventure games so entertaining, we have had a good opportunity to study the effects of CAI on college students and on teaching strategies. Other programs may or may not contain all the aspects of the program we are developing, but their effects on educational delivery systems will probably be similar. We will focus on our experiences with the program we are developing.

Program Objectives

Entitled Write to the Top, this simulation-game encompasses ten

instructional units, with the materials contained on computer disks and in a student workbook. Each of the ten units has been developed with specific and clearly defined instructional objectives. Each unit is further divided into a set of instructional modules, which have been sequenced for the most effective learning. The ten units cover the topics traditionally included in college-level business communication classes. Students will begin by solving simple problems and proceed to the more difficult, with a standard arrangement of course content:

Unit 1: Orientation and Pretest
Unit 2: Basic Writing Skills
Unit 3: Elements of Effective Communication
Unit 4: Positive and Neutral Messages
Unit 5: Negative Messages
Unit 6: Persuasive Messages
Unit 7: Mixed Messages
Unit 8: Written and Oral Reports
Unit 9: Managerial Communication
Unit 10: Final Evaluation

In addition to the traditional objectives of teaching the course content usually associated with these business communication topics, the CAI package attempts to meet the additional objectives mentioned previously. First, college writing classes are usually among the least efficient from an administrative standpoint. As is true of other writing classes, business communication classes are usually kept small (fewer than 30 students a section) so that instructors will be able to assign and evaluate sufficient memos, letters, and reports to provide students with the practice and feedback necessary for improvement.

Second, because writing is usually evaluated by counting grammatical, mechanical, and content errors, students often enter business communication classes with a negative attitude toward writing and have that negative attitude confirmed by a general lack of positive reinforcement for those parts of messages that are free of error. This negative attitude is compounded because students in a quantitatively oriented age are often unable to see the need for the essentially qualitative skills of communication. In spite of many studies showing the importance of communication skills (e.g., Hildebrandt, et al. 1982), most students believe that technical competence in a specific area will ensure success regardless of the quality of their letters and reports.

Third, business communication textbooks and instructors do not always agree about matters of strategy, style, content, or even mechanics. (Should a series have a comma before the conjunction? Can a good letter be more than one page long?) As a result, even among students using the same text, wide differences in standards of grading across instructors can contribute to student dissatisfaction with the course and to uncertainity about course objectives (Bowman, 1972). Students rarely encounter such wide diversity of opinion in their accounting or market research classes.

Fourth, the objectives of business communication classes--like those of most writing classes--are usually not defined well enough for either

students or instructors to be able to determine accurately whether they have been met. Can a negative message, for example, be effective if it presents the refusal before providing the reason for the refusal? How should an instructor compare the relative effectiveness of a letter using the correct structure but containing errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar with that of a letter whose only fault is one of structure?

The CAI package will overcome these problems by performing many of the tasks normally performed by the instructor, by performing them in a way students will find interesting, and by performing them objectively and consistently from student to student and from assignment to assignment. The interactive nature of the computer program will afford students the opportunity to test their knowledge, ideas, and skills against problems in much the same way as they do in traditional instructor-led discussion sections. Further, the students will never need to fear that they will lose face with the computer for answering incorrectly. Unlike instructors, the computer will not form a negative opinion of students who do not answer correctly the first time.

The computer will offer prompts (hints), immediate feedback for right and wrong responses, "help" when required, remedial instruction when necessary, and pre-evaluation of written materials (checked for readability, format, structure, and many important business communication concepts). As a result, individual instructors will be able to handle larger class loads because they will have fewer papers to evaluate, and the computer will have already helped students eliminate most of the errors that make paper grading so time consuming. One of the major advantages of the CAI package, in fact, will be the ability of the computer to perform much of the student evaluation necessary, freeing the instructor to spend proportionally more time teaching.

Simulation and Gaming Aspects

One of the principal reasons that Write to the Top will be able to achieve these instructional and administrative objectives is that it incorporates simulation and gaming into the program. The value of employing a simulation or gaming feature in an instructional package is that it serves as the "hook"--the interesting feature that catches the user's attention at least long enough for the heart of the package to take hold. The danger of using such a strategy, however, is that the game can quickly overshadow the instruction. Such a program is analogous to textbooks including too many cartoons and cute stories: students take the content less seriously.

The simulation should enhance rather than compete with the instructional activities of the package. For this reason, Write to the Top will include a realistic and entertaining simulation based on plausible writing situations and problems in a contemporary American business setting. The business context for communication situations is a large computer manufacturing company with a rigorous organizational development plan. Training and development seminars on business communication skills will be the simulation medium for presenting the package's instructional content.

The simulation-game of Write to the Top starts the student in the

Personnel Office of the Big Byte Computer Corporation, applying for an entry-level job in his or her chosen field: marketing, production, personnel, public relations, or finance. The Personnel Department gives a qualifying test to determine what the student already knows about basic writing skills, the elements of effective communication, different structures for letters and memos, inductive and deductive organizational patterns, graphic and visual aids, and oral presentations. Students who do well on the basic writing skills part of the test will be hired and sent to the orientation and training program. The other parts of the qualifying test serve as a pretest against which subsequent progress will be measured. Students who do not do well on the basic writing skills part of the test are "rejected for employment" and instructed to review basic writing skills before reapplying.

During orientation, the students learn more about Big Byte and its relationships with suppliers, customers, and community organizations. Students then review the elements of effective business communication, including positive tone, you-attitude, conciseness, and expected formats for letters and memos. Once orientation is completed, the students, now "probationary employees," start work on the first assignment in their chosen fields.

After successfully completing the probationary period, students will attend (in simulation) training and development seminars providing instruction in traditional business communication topics. At each of these seminars, students will receive perquisites based on their level of performance. Students who do well with negative message materials, for example, will be treated to a night on the town (in San Francisco) or perhaps a day of deep sea fishing in the Pacific. Those who don't do well will have dinner at McDonald's and spend their day testing shark repellant under the executive yacht.

Doing well at the seminar will also mean appropriate promotions and salary increases. A student selecting finance as his or her field, for example, would begin work as a Junior Staff Auditor and progress through the positions of Staff Auditor, Director of the Auditing Department, and the Vice President of Financial Planning. Students who have done well would earn promotion to the position of President of Big Byte. The other areas have similar career paths. Students will be able to compare their progress and relative success by comparing job titles, salaries, and perquisites. Finally, upon reaching the twilight of his or her "career," the student will be given a final comprehensive performance review. Doing well here will mean comfortable retirement and perhaps a nice, padded chair in the boardroom. Doing poorly will mean trying to make ends meet on Social Security.

Just as people will compete to accumulate points at Pac-Man and to solve complex, multi-level adventure games, they will compete at business simulations including a game component. Unlike the typical competition for grades in college classes, the competition to do well with the computer package will be directly related to the student's motivation to learn the material. To do well, a student will have to know the material well enough to answer objective questions and to apply the concepts in a variety of contexts, from simple to complex.

Tutorials

The instructional content of Write to the Top is contained within the tutorial units, each of which is divided into modules. The structure of most of the units is identical. Each unit opens with a training seminar in which the "employee" is "sent" to the locale at which the training is to occur. This opening module contains the instructional content for the unit. The instruction consists primarily of an orientation to the topic being covered in that unit and presentation of the rules of communication for that unit along with examples of their use.

To keep the computer from being used as a glorified page-turner, much of this instructional material appears in a student workbook and may also be included in class lectures and a traditional textbook. Write to the Top is being designed for compatibility with ten of the leading business communication textbooks.

Computer Quiz. The first CAI instructional module in each unit consists of a set of multiple choice questions that measure how much was learned from the required reading and during class lecture-discussion sessions. The current configuration of the program requires students to pass the quiz module with 90 percent mastery before they are permitted to continue.

Paragraph and Sentence Selection. The next two modules require the students to construct letters in response to problems posed in the workbook by selecting prewritten paragraphs (in the case of the first module) or by selecting prewritten sentences which must be arranged into paragraphs and letters (in the second module). These multiple choice letter construction modules are intended to allow the student to apply concepts which were taught in the training seminar and tested in the multiple choice quiz (Kerek, Daiker & Morenberg, 1980). Because selecting prewritten material is easier than composing a letter, it serves as an introduction to the more difficult assignments which follow (Meehan & Rosenbloom, 1980).

Revision. The next module requires the student to identify problems in a poorly written letter, and the following module is related in that the student is again presented with a poorly written letter. This time, however, he or she must use the text editing capabilities of Write to the Top to edit the letter until it is correct. The student may receive hints about the correctness of his or her decisions so that all students should be able to achieve a quality letter eventually. Within the context of the Big Byte simulation, these poorly written letters are being presented as though written by a subordinate for evaluation by a superior (the student) so that the letters can be corrected before being approved for "distribution" (submission to the instructor for final evaluation).

The student's editing task is similar to that of a supervisor who reads, evaluates, and corrects the written message. The computer will evaluate the student's performance based on the quality of the editing, the time required to complete the task, and the number of hints required to complete the task successfully.

Composition. The last task requires the student to write a letter

in response to a problem posed in the assignment. The student can use the built-in text-editing capabilities of the program to draft this letter. Because the ultimate objective of a course in business communication is to teach students the complex skill of writing effective messages, the letter writing module always comes last in the instructional units. A special analysis program will pregrade a student's paper for format, structure, positive tone, you-attitude, active/passive voice, spelling, readability, and other factors specific to the particular problem.

In addition to the units and modules already covered, the program will also track the frame in which the student is currently working. In this way a student may request "HELP" at any time from the computer, and the request will be answered with a reference to an appropriate resource based upon the unit, module, and frame number currently being dealt with by the student. The student may also request that the program be stopped at any point. A "STOP" request stops the program and records the location of the stop on the student's disk. The next time the student uses the program, he or she will automatically be restarted at the beginning of the module in which he or she had stopped.

Computer-Managed Instruction

The CAI package will help the instructor manage the instruction in several ways. First, it will objectively evaluate the student's understanding of the concepts through the use of multiple-choice questions. If the student shows a good grasp of a particular set of concepts, the program will allow the student the choice of skipping over one or more modules within that unit. If the student has trouble with certain concepts, the program will stop the tutorial and suggest remedial readings. It will also keep track of these troublesome concepts for the instructor. The instructor will then know if there is a pattern of problems developing for one student or for an entire class.

Second, the ability of the student to apply the concepts taught is measured through evaluation of his or her performance in the letter analysis, letter critique, and letter-writing modules. The letter analysis routine which assesses student performance in these modules will help to ensure consistency in the grading of letters. Currently, when an instructor sits down with 80 papers, in spite of the best of intentions, he or she cannot proceed with confidence that the papers at the end of the grading session will be graded according to the same standards as the papers at the start of the session. With access to several objective measures of the letters already provided by the computer, however, a much more consistent grading pattern should develop. The same routine will also provide the student with much more immediate feedback, allowing him or her to correct any misconceptions just after completing the assignment, rather than one or more days later.

Third, it will keep track of each student's progress and the number of times a student went through a module to complete it successfully. This should give the instructor an idea of how difficult the student is finding the material and should help the instructor evaluate the student.

Fourth, the structure of the modules, units, and package should help to ensure that all activities in multi-section classes are adequately

covered and reduce errors of variability at the same time. Four major sources of variability (error) when evaluating written compositions are (1) the writer variable--fluctuation in performance by a student from time to time (2) the assignment variable, such as the particular topic and the situation in which it is approached (3) the rater variable--the instructor's personal biases and inconsistencies, and (4) the instructor variable--the tendency of raters to diverge from a uniform standard (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963).

The use of Write to the Top for evaluating a student's composition will be most helpful in reducing the error due to the rater variable because it will consistently evaluate several aspects of a memo or letter. Many a red-eyed instructor can testify to the value of and need for such a helper. Instructor variability will also be effectively reduced since a pool of experts will establish scoring criteria for the different aspects of Write to the Top. At least within the context of the simulation and specialization area of each student, Write to the Top will also reduce assignment variability because all assignments will be clearly specified for each specialty area. This feature should be particularly useful for multiple-section classes as well.

Product Development Plans

Developing innovative computer packages of this variety is a major undertaking, and careful planning of both instructional and programming design--its implementation and evaluation--is critical if CAI materials are to fulfill their promise. Write to the Top, for example, will undergo four developmental stages before a final version is released for sale. Mock up and prototype versions established and evaluated basic instructional design components.

The third version, the pilot, will be the first complete version of the package. It will be a major revision and upgrade of the prototype based on the results of the prototype evaluation. The pilot version will contain some of the gaming elements and will be tested on classes of students in several parts of the country and reviewed by business communication experts. Write to the Top is currently in this phase of testing. The fourth version is the first production version of the package. It will have all the simulation-gaming elements and will be customized to fit any of several microcomputers.

Among the factors we will be testing with the pilot version of the program is the possibility of eliminating the multiple choice letter construction modules by expanding the critiquing and editing module. Teaching composition may be achieved more efficiently by concentrating on the "good-bad" letter discrimination and on editing functions, rather than on composition by selection function (Skinner, 1957, 1968).

We will also be testing the efficiency of the instructional design. Traditional approaches have emphasized logical progressions and simple to complex arrangements of the instructional material (Briggs, 1968; Lysaught & Williams, 1963). Few CAI projects have investigated the role played by the sequencing of instructional material in the overall efficiency of the CAI package. We will investigate various methods of arranging the instructional modules and the material within the modules.

The final criteria for acceptance of the best design must be the speed and ease with which the student acquires the necessary skills and the degree to which the targeted skills are acquired.

Implications for Business Communication Instructors

Results of preliminary testing indicate that Write to the Top is capable of doing everything it should. In an informal test comparing the evaluation of student papers by the computer and by selected business communication experts, for example, the computer's scoring was indistinguishable from that of the humans in all but one of 30 cases. We expect formal testing with an improved evaluation algorithm to result in a final package that will not only help students master business communication concepts but also evaluate their ability to apply those concepts in solving typical business communication problems.

Write to the Top and other CAI packages currently being developed have the following important implications for business communication instructors:

1. Fewer instructors will be teaching larger sections. CAI packages will greatly reduce the number of papers that must be graded and reduce the number of mistakes that must be marked on each paper. Class sizes will no longer be limited by the number of papers an instructor must grade but will be determined by computer availability and rules established by accrediting bodies.
2. Class schedules will require changing to take full advantage of computer availability. Instructors will be able to reduce the time spent in class on practice exercises, quizzes, exams, and in-class writings. Our experience thus far indicates that students should spend approximately one hour a week in lecture-discussion, three or four hours a week in outside preparation, and two or three hours a week working on the computer.
3. Teaching strategies will change as a result of the computer's ability to maintain records. Individual writing difficulties may be isolated and treated with greater ease. It is a simple task for the computer to check a student's work for repeated errors, whereas an instructor may not remember from assignment to assignment which student has made which errors. Strengths and weaknesses of an entire class may be tracked as easily as those of an individual student, which will allow instructors to spend the greatest amount of time on those concepts causing the greatest difficulty.
4. As colleges and universities turn to CAI packages to reduce the cost of their programs, teaching positions will be filled by those sufficiently conversant with computer equipment and software to understand how typical programs work and to diagnose and correct minor difficulties.

We are entering "a brave, new world," and many unanswered questions

remain. The most disturbing of these is whether teachers are necessary at all. A "perfect" CAI package would theoretically replace the instructor completely. At this time, a perfect CAI package seems a long way off. In the interim, we have much to do to ensure that we keep pace with the developing technology.

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COMPUTERS: MODELS AND METAPHORS FOR TEACHING BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL WRITING

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ABSTRACT

The computerization of education is exposing students to conceptual and procedural models that can improve business and technical writing. For example, a well-documented, top down structured computer program displays the internal logic and referential clarity desired in transactional writing. Even word processing programs provide an operational definition of revising. And debugging as a thinking skill can be applied to textual analysis and proofreading. Such computer concepts offer a practical context for discussing writing strategies.

Back when computers were a newer and less familiar phenomenon, writers often turned to the analogy of the human brain to explain how the electronic wonders worked. To some extent that analogy has become fixed in the jargon of computers: it is common to talk about artificial "intelligence," "dumb" terminals, "memory" capacity, "intelligent" keyboards, and "smart" interface cards. But by and large the metaphor of the brain is no longer central to explicating the new technology. In fact, now that computers are no longer remote, room-filling curiosities but affordable, "personal" tools for performing common tasks, they have themselves in turn become a rich source of metaphor.

In an interdisciplinary field like business and technical communication, we are continually observing and adapting the habits of mind and language found in many subject areas. It is only natural, then, that we should turn to computer science, too, in search of new concepts and metaphors, ones that we can tap for their power to clarify and illustrate key writing principles.

Although we often joke about thinking like a computer, I was reminded recently by a rather trivial incident that computer modes of thinking can have subtle but real effects on us, sometimes surfacing in unlikely situations. The specific situation I'm referring to occurred when my wife and I decided one day to make some fresh pasta. As I was reading the directions on the package of semolina flour, hardly expecting a revelation of any sort, I was suddenly struck by the organizational design of the pasta directions--based not on the linearity of the typical cookbook recipe but upon a conditional branching (i.e., conditional upon conventional or microwave cooking). I immediately recognized this as a primitive computer-like program, and this recognition surprised me; it would not have occurred at all a few years ago. My knowledge of computer programming had given me concepts and terminology that enabled me to see this recipe from a new

perspective and to feel--even in this minor experience--that momentary pleasure of "knowing" that results from being able to fit new information comfortably into a pre-existing context. This process of assimilation is, of course, a fundamental and efficient method of processing data. Since in the teaching of business and technical writing it is just such practical methods of thinking that we are concerned with, I'd like to focus on three promising computer concepts--structured programming, word processing, and debugging.

STRUCTURED PROGRAMMING

The first computer programs were shapeless lists of basic commands, but as programs grew in complexity such primitive strings of code became intolerable--not to the computer but to the programmer. From FORTRAN and Pascal to Ada and Modula-2 the solution has been to design computer languages with more and more concern for clear structure. To writers, this quest for structure is a familiar one since we re-enact it every time we write, searching first for an order intrinsic to the particular subject matter and to our own thought processes and then later for an explicit order compatible with the needs and understanding of readers. In a larger sense, too, the maturation of a typical writer follows roughly the same process; beginning writers settle for loose lists of information while experienced writers recognize the need for a rigorous logic to aid their own thinking and that of their readers.

Thus we can identify at least one concern that has emerged from both the short history of computer science and the long history of rhetoric--a concern for arrangement. If we suspect that the ideas of order and clarity might translate well from one discipline to another, then a structured computer program with its special concern for internal logic and referential clarity might well serve as a practical model for many kinds of writing, especially transactional writing. But, if this is true, how can we help business and technical students see that the computer skills they're learning in programming classes have value in the writing classroom as well? We might begin by considering the general suggestions frequently given to computer science students to help them improve the logic and readability of their programs. Here are four such suggestions along with their counterparts for writing:

1. Follow a top-down design.

In the context of writing we usually describe top-down thinking in different terms, sometimes as deduction, sometimes as general-to-particular organization, sometimes as informational order. Whatever we call it, the notion of levels of abstraction is a critical one for writing. The representation of this idea as a main-program-with-subroutines structure can help to reinforce and clarify this principle since the computer context is more readily accessible to many of our business and technical students than, for example, Francis Christensen's concept of coordinated and subordinated structures.[1]

Likewise, for some students the visual linearity of traditional outlines can obscure the close relationship that should exist between subtopic and thesis, yet for these same students the idea of returning from a subroutine to the main program may more clearly describe the concept of coherence and the role of transitions in creating that coherence. I've found that the subroutine concept works especially well when taught with hierarchical tree outlines.[2] Both equate movement away from the source (main program or thesis) with a movement toward greater specificity; both illustrate the critical junctures or nodes (transitions) where branching leads to a change in direction; both describe a circuitous journey, a moving out and a circling back, always homing in on the central concept before moving on to a new idea or task. This approach to organization can be especially helpful for longer business and technical reports where many students recognize the necessity for structural control but view that control as a linear process. For students who, even in dutifully following an outline, chase one idea after another, leaving their thesis forgotten in the dim shadows of the introduction and their readers trapped on a path of no return, the subroutine principle can serve as a practical reminder of a common organizational strategy.

2. Use a consistent structure.

Many high level languages, especially teaching languages like Pascal, require a set structure for programs. Others, like BASIC, have no such built-in structure; instead programmers are urged to create their own and to follow it closely in all applications. The typically recommended structure can prove a model not only for good programming but for good writing as well. Since I've already discussed some of the implications for the main program-subroutine structure, let me focus on another part of this model: the introduction. Here are the four program components that usually precede the main program along with what would be the equivalent parts for a typical piece of writing.

Program description. Usually this description includes a brief title, the programmer's name, an operational summary of the program, and an explanation of the required input and the intended output. As such it describes a useful prewriting exercise for capsulizing the rhetorical situation--central idea, nature of the writer or persona, purpose of the writing, initial knowledge and attitudes of the audience and anticipated effects upon the audience. It also approximates a basic checklist of information to be included in the preliminary pages of a typical business and technical report (title, author, abstract, description of purpose and audience, conclusions or recommendations).

Variable declarations. Declaring variables corresponds to the writer's task of defining key terms and raises some of the same questions, especially for technical and scientific writing. First, just as programmers must decide whether to use a simpler but more obscure variable name like N$ or a more self-explanatory one like NAME$, so a technical writer must decide whether EDA will be recognized as the federal Economic Development Act or whether the full title should be used. Second, writers must place definitions strategically, making distinctions comparable to those a programmer makes between global and

local variables; they must decide which definitions are to be used throughout a piece of writing and need to be defined in the introduction or glossary and which are "local" to a particular section and can be introduced there. Once the variables are declared or the key terms defined, both programmer and writer must be equally careful that the values or meanings remain consistent throughout.

Procedural declarations. For conveying routine information, business and technical writing is likely to be quite explicit in "declaring its procedures," that is, in defining the topical divisions that constitute its basic organization; such writing typically follows a direct, deliberate pattern, one that includes in the introduction not only the purpose of the communication but a statement about organization as well. Furthermore, the "heading" and "block" structure of individual procedures or subroutines (especially in languages like Pascal) functionally parallel the header sentence and supporting evidence structure fundamental to so many ideas about paragraph construction.

Initialization. Programmers and writers know that the ultimate success of their efforts depends upon a sound beginning, upon a predetermined background of information that will be the same each time the program is run or the document read. The initialization stage is the way each guarantees that common beginning. For the writer it means a careful analysis of audience so that much of the gap in knowledge between the writer and reader can be eliminated at the outset, leaving only the main issue to be developed as the writing progresses.

3. Highlight structural divisions.

Programmers soon learn to use upper and lower case, indentation, spacing, punctuation, and graphics to enhance the structural readability of their programs. This principle is so clear than even students with no knowledge of computer programming can immediately see the difference between a well-documented program and a list of undifferentiated commands. Such a comparison makes a valuable introduction to the formatting of technical and business reports, where the referential nature of the writing makes such visual support of internal structure equally mandatory.

4. Document any potentially confusing sections.

Textbooks sometimes claim that it is possible to overdocument a computer program, but programmers admit that the opposite is more likely--just as writers know that they're more likely to be obscure than to overexplain. Having students compare several programs with varying amounts of explanatory comments can effectively illustrate the kinds of documentation writers must attend to. Because computer code is by nature more concise and potentially cryptic, such examples highlight the interplay between specifics and generalizations in a most dramatic way.

In the principles of structured programming, then, we can find some useful analogies to writing, making possible both brief and extended comparisons between the organizational tasks posed by these two activities. In doing so, we tighten the concept of "language" used in both fields.

WORD PROCESSING

If rewriting is not yet pleasurable, it is at least no longer an agony. Electronic revision functions in the phosphor light of a monochrome screen, a near magical world where cursors flit about with Tinkerbell speed and words hover in a limbo state between void and permanence, waiting to appear or disappear at the writer's will. At least this is the image of ease and efficiency that many are beginning to associate with electronic writing, though at times word processors can treat one's words with an almost Puckish delight for mischief. But word processing promises a greater benefit for novice writers than mere convenience; it promises a guide to revision.

A typical word processing program would include such features as insertion, deletion, substitution, relocation, and formatting. Even in elementary school, students can quickly learn the simple editing commands associated with these features, as proven by the growing popularity of such programs as Bank Street Writer. In doing so, the students are in effect learning a finite list of topics for revising; that is, they are learning an operational definition of the revising process. The manual or tutorial that accompanies a typical word processing program implicitly suggests to students that these discrete activities are the ones customarily practiced by writers when they revise. At the same time the speed of executing these editing tasks encourages their use. What I hear consistently from those who use computers to compose and revise are claims about more thorough rewriting: "I experiment more. It's so easy to move passages around and compare different versions." "I write more drafts; the printer does the extra typing for me." "The final product is better since I don't mind making even minor changes." "It's nice to be able to wipe out a bad idea with a single keystroke and start fresh." A recent survey of 60 Stanford University faculty members who use microcomputers for word processing found these writers more prolific than their colleagues. Moreover, they were convinced that computers were helping them produce higher quality writing.[3] Aren't many student writers likely to experience some of the same increased confidence, productivity, and quality?

Maybe the next step will be to teach heuristics for rewriting as we have for prewriting, but ones based on word processing methods. Tutorials that introduce word processing commands can serve a dual purpose by suggesting procedures for revising: Could this sentence be moved elsewhere in this paragraph? If so, would words need to be added or deleted? Are any key words in this sentence repeated elsewhere in the paragraph or in other paragraphs? Such questions lead to familiarization with the command conventions of specific software while raising constructive rhetorical questions, too.

Perhaps we'll be able to speak more precisely about electronic rewriting as the use of computers for word processing becomes more widespread in our schools and as more controlled studies are performed to measure the effects of word processing structures on habits of

revising. But already it is obvious that students value the expression of their own thoughts more when not intimidated by the visual reality of smudges and erasures, of crossed-out passages and aborted beginnings, of illegible revisions and scrap-paper insertions. And, using the terminology of word processing, we can talk about "search-and-replace" or "formatting" strategies that encourage students to experiment, to use the computer screen as a visual laboratory--to replace unwanted jargon, to vary transitional markers, to compare formal presentations of headings, paragraphs, lists, title pages, tables, or letter formats.

DEBUGGING

Seymour Papert, the MIT developer of the LOGO computer language, has been a strong advocate of "debugging" as a valuable thinking skill that can be learned in the positive, non-threatening, self-paced microworlds of computer programs and then transferred to real problem-solving situations.[4] With the use of computers, a healthy debugging approach to writing problems can be taught to students. I would define debugging as a process of systematically discovering malfunctions, tracing them to their source, and eliminating them. This is problem-solving or troubleshooting in its broadest sense and, I take it, what Mina Shaughnessy was advocating in wanting both teachers and students to see intelligence behind writing errors and "to harness that intelligence in the service of learning."[5] When applied to writing, debugging places strong emphasis upon the full rhetorical situation. How can one identify a malfunction without first articulating the writer's intended purpose and, if possible, assessing the writing's effect upon the readers or upon a test audience? And debugging also emphasizes analytical thinking and knowledge of language. How else can you look at a particular effect and hypothesize about the possible causes? Finally, debugging emphasizes systematic discovery. How else can one discern patterns and be alert to them in future writings in the way that programmers come to know and respect the recurring bugs inherent in software development?

Because of the general scientific and technical emphasis of Iowa State University, many of our students respond well to a debugging approach to their writing. In proofreading, for instance, I have devised a list of general procedures for dealing with such typical problems as spelling and punctuation. I work with students to tailor an individualized set of debugging steps that they can use and modify long after their course work is finished. To do this, students will typically begin by trying several general purpose strategies. For example, I've developed a proofreading procedure for spelling that uses cover sheets of paper to divide the student's writing into three vertical columns, only one being visible at a time. The student reads from the bottom to the top of this one visible column, marking words of doubtful spelling or ones that match a personal list of troublesome words. If, after several weeks of practicing this technique, it proves effective by discovering additional misspellings, it is added to a more permanent set of procedures, arranged so that the "bugs" or errors occurring most often in the student's writing head the list. For those with serious spelling problems, I recommend about three distinct proofreading techniques for spelling alone.

After this initial process aimed at developing a working set of procedures for debugging errors, we enter the second phase. By this time students have become more conscious and systematic in their thinking about their own writing. They have written informal analyses of each assignment, explaining how they have applied general writing principles to a particular task, outlining the rhetorical problems created by that task as well as evaluating their individual solutions.[6] They have practiced the basic steps in precise proofreading. Now they can turn their attention to the discovery stage of debugging. I have them go over graded writing assignments and look for patterns in their errors, not patterns defined by the grammatical labels in textbooks but patterns which they can identify. The results are unpredictable, sometimes startling; one student found that he misspelled words (usually by omitting final consonants) primarily before punctuation marks. As a result, he added a debugging step to his proofreading procedures in which he merely scanned his writing for each punctuation mark and checked the spelling of the preceding word. By this method he was able to locate more misspellings and to do so without teacher supervision. More typically students discover that certain words seem to trigger instinctive responses--commas perhaps or sentence breaks--and can learn to search for these words deliberately (a task computers make much easier). Or they spot recurring phrases (wordy or passive constructions, cliches, jargon, unemphatic sentence openers) which they now see as "bugs" to be incorporated into future "search-and-replace" strategies.

The first stage of this process can be computerized so that students, once they've entered text, can be presented with general proofreading procedures and be guided through them till they become comfortable with the process. Then later after an individualized approach to debugging has been developed, the computer can prompt the student with appropriate questions, helping develop permanent, efficient proofreading habits.

All in all, these computer-related concepts that I've mentioned offer us as teachers sound learning models and a popular, practical context for discussing and improving writing. Sometimes I use these analogies only in a passing remark, sometimes as a convenient source of terminology, sometimes as alternative approaches to explaining key writing principles, sometimes as a bridge of understanding between myself and a particular student or class. Since the computerization of education is exposing students to new and powerful models, we as teachers of business and technical writing may do well to evaluate them carefully and, where appropriate, to impress them in the service of better writing.

NOTES

[1] Francis Christensen and Bonniejean Christensen, A New Rhetoric (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 126-165.

[2] Linda Flower provides a useful explanation of tree outlines, or "issue trees" as she calls them, in Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), pp. 87-100.

[3] Donald Case, doctoral dissertation in progress, University of California at Los Angeles.

[4] Seymour Papert, Mindstorms: Children, Computer, and Powerful Ideas (New York: Harper Colophon, Basic Books, 1980), pp. 95-119.

[5] Mina Shaughnessy, Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 11.

[6] I describe these analyses in detail in "Integrating Oral and Written Business Communication" in Exploring Speaking-Writing Relationships: Connections and Contrasts, ed. Barry M. Kroll and Roberta J. Vann (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1981), pp. 184-197.

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